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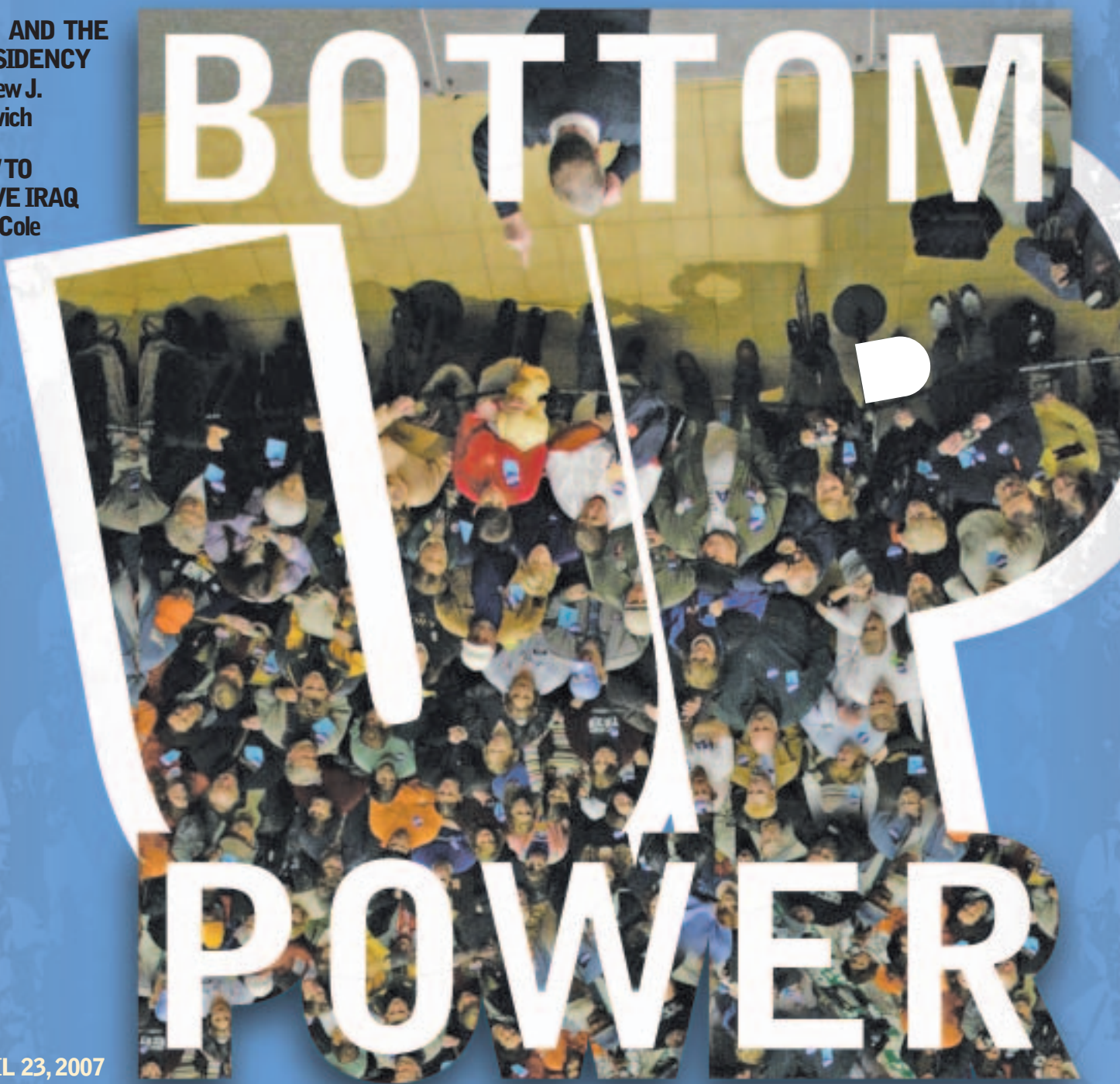

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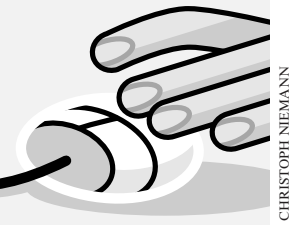
LETTERS

Letters



CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

VICTIM–OFFENDER RECONCILIATION

San Francisco

■ Criminal justice is a topic my organization, Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility is engaged in (see www.adpsr.org/prisons), so I read the April 2 "Letters" column about Sunil Dutta's "Kill the Death Penalty" [Feb. 26] with great interest. Dutta says "victims' families can never forget the pain or overcome the loss" associated with crime, but the history of victim-offender reconciliation programs shows that many victims can indeed overcome their pain and suffering. Dutta argues for breaking the "vicious cycle of revenge," so it would follow that crime victims should be given the opportunity to get beyond the desire for revenge and, further, that the door should somehow be kept open for those who commit crimes to be transformed as well—making Dutta's support for life without parole seem inconsistent with his other argument.

I share Dutta's sympathy for the victims of crime, but all too often victims are paraded as props by "tough on crime" politicians to stoke public fear and thinly veiled racism. Clearly Dutta is not in this category, but a better expression of sympathy with victims is to demand measures to reduce crime by empowering those most likely to be victims (women, people of color and poor people) and restoring the communities suffering most from crime (which law enforcement alone has repeatedly failed to achieve). Because so much harm due to crime cannot be reversed, hanging on to the suffering caused by crime must give way to truly healing individuals and communities so that far fewer tragedies occur in the future.

RAPHAEL SPERRY

WITHDRAWAL'S 'MORAL IMPERATIVE'

Pound Ridge, NY

■ Stephen F. Cohen's March 26 "Conscience and the War" should be required reading for every American. What a valuable service he has done, offering a crystal-clear overview of this unmitigated disaster and persuasively explaining the "moral imperative" of a quick and complete withdrawal. May we somehow find the courage to stop the Bush Administration's runaway train of destruction. KEN SWENSEN

Santa Rosa, Calif.

■ "Conscience and the War" is a superb statement of the catastrophe the United States has precipitated by its aggression in Iraq. We are now entangled in a monstrous Gordian knot of military professionals, private contractors, munitions manufacturers and arms merchants. This proliferating snarl feeds our "defense" establishment and eats away our financial resources. In *Nemesis*, Chalmers Johnson points out that an exit strategy was never planned because there was to be no exit. As for resolving the knotty Iraq debacle, political timidity and a warrior hero mystique apparently blocks conscience and common sense. ROSEMARY H. HAYES

Moscow

■ I thoroughly agree with Stephen F. Cohen that "the only moral course [in Iraq] is withdrawal, along with a pledge to help fund the country's reconstruction." Meanwhile, however, Iraqi civilians are caught in a deadly crossfire between the US occupation and reactionary Islamic militias who systematically attack schoolteachers, health workers and trade unionists while creating a living hell for women—who formerly held more than half the civil service jobs in Iraq. What can "Americans of conscience" do? During Ronald Reagan's *contra* wars of the 1980s, networks of Americans provided direct political support and vital material aid to democratic and progressive groups in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala. Today, US trade unions, teachers and other progressives are supporting the Iraqi Freedom Congress, which defends Iraqi women, unionized workers and secularists against the double depredations of reactionary Islamists and the occupation. *Nation* readers can learn more about the IFC (and make PayPal contributions) by clicking on www.ifcongress.com/English. RICHARD GREEMAN

IT'S BROKE—FIX IT

Denver

■ I agreed with most of Mark Green's points in "How to Fix Our Democracy" [March 12], but he's off track when he attacks the way the Senate is elected as a "stunning violation of democracy." I am originally from Vermont, which has produced such statesmen as George Aiken, Robert Stafford, Patrick Leahy, James Jeffords and Bernie Sanders. I would hate to think that the Senate would become all about New York and California because of fears of "small, rural, largely red states." There is a place where "one person, one vote" applies. It's called the House of Representatives. BETSY GOTTLIEB

Hollis, NH

■ I am astounded that Mark Green states that "the 2002 Help America Vote Act properly required that states move to electronic voting." HAVA didn't do anything properly except to be a proper example of why our nation is a kleptocracy rather than a democratic republic. By mandating electronic voting systems, the government has enriched the corporations that make these systems and decreased the verifiability of our election process. My precinct uses paper ballots read by optical scanners. The votes can be recounted by hand. Each voting station costs about $20, and we have a more than ample supply. HAVA is going to force us to replace those twenty-dollar tables with corrupt machines from Diebold that cost thousands and do nothing but make it simple to steal votes. MARK RODDY

New York City

■ A historical footnote to Mark Green's thoughtful piece: During the drafting of the Pennsylvania Constitution, Benjamin Franklin submitted this provision: "That an enormous Proportion of Property vested in a few Individuals is dangerous to the Rights, and destructive of the Common Happiness, of Mankind; and therefore every free State hath a Right by its Laws to discourage the Possession of such Property." It was voted down (by the property holders). Time to reconsider. CARL GINSBURG

IMMIGRANT FACTS & FICTIONS

Franklin Twp., NJ

■ Andrea Batista Schlesinger ["Pro-Immigrant Populism," March 5] is on target when she says "if we want to avoid a race to the bottom between native and immigrant workers, we must create a policy that strengthens the workplace rights of immigrant workers." We also need to challenge the half-truths and distortions of the anti-immigrant populists (as well as some of the oversimplifications of pro-immigrant forces, which undermine their credibility). Two examples from the article: Do immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in wages? Generally, yes, but there are some communities, apparently, where the increasing cost of emergency health services is at least partially due to use by low-income immigrant families. This problem needs to be confronted. Do immigrants working in the "underground economy" bring down the wages of native workers? Sometimes, but not necessarily. It depends on where, and what jobs. There is a great deal of research on these and related subjects, much of it controversial. But we need to make it clear that unequivocal statements about immigrants' taking jobs away from US-born workers, or undermining their wages, are wrong. This is one small step toward overcoming the divide between US-born and immigrant working people. MARTIN OPPENHEIMER

Loveland, Colo.

■ I agree with Andrea Batista Schlesinger that we must strengthen workers' rights so that

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EDITORIALS

Time to Act on Inequality

In newsrooms, a favorite excuse used by reporters and editors to kill a story is to say, "We already had that." Why waste space on old news? Readers already know that income inequality is growing ferociously in America. Some indefatigable reporters, however, bull their way past the objections. David Cay Johnston of the *New York Times* recently came up with new facts that make the familiar old story shocking again. The top 1 percent of Americans are now getting the largest share of national income since 1928. And a mere 300,000 are now getting almost the same income as 150 million others on the bottom of the wage ladder.

The wage gap has nearly doubled since 1980, the dawn of the conservative era. The deterioration of equitable income in American society is not over. It continues to get much worse. The top 10 percent—the people earning roughly $100,000 a year and higher—now get 48.5 percent of total income. Not surprisingly, average incomes for the bottom 90 percent are down slightly. These numbers are from the Internal Revenue Service for 2005, and experts agree they understate the disparities.

This country is already in the thick of another presidential election, and we need to learn more. Might we hear the candidates address this national scandal and say concretely what they intend to do about it? Republicans, we know, will duck and dodge. But Democratic hopefuls are not exactly speaking out on inequality either. John Edwards is an admirable exception; he has declared unilaterally that income inequality is no longer a taboo subject.

Voters understand what's happening and they are overwhelmingly distressed, as the Pew Research Center's recent comprehensive polling confirmed. Some 73 percent of Americans agree with this statement: "Today it's really true that the rich get richer while the poor get poorer." More striking is the fact that two-thirds of affluent families (incomes of $75,000 and higher) agree.

The public has shifted its political attitudes significantly, according to Pew, returning to the sense of connectedness that prevailed before it was weakened by many years of conservative ideology. If you ask now whether government has obligations to take care of people who can't care for themselves, 69 percent agree, up from 57 percent at the low point of 1994, when Republicans captured Congress. These social sensibilities are doubtless related to what people feel in their own lives. Some 44 percent say they "don't have enough money to make ends meet." That is, nearly half the country feels financially troubled.

Put aside economic theory and income statistics. Inequality has a human face, and its expression is one of stressful anxiety. In a survey last fall, Lake Research Partners asked nonsupervisory workers (who make up about 80 percent of the workforce) what worries them most in everyday life. Not being able to afford healthcare when you or your family needs it: 77 percent. Not having enough money for retirement: 77 percent. Losing your job and not being able to find one with the same pay and benefits: 65 percent. Having your standard of living slip further: 68 percent. Losing your home or never owning a home: 59 percent. (For a more intimate portrait of how inequality devours the social fabric, read Eyal Press in this issue on poverty's move to the suburbs.)

The Democrats in Congress have taken modest but valuable first steps toward reversing wage inequality and economic fears by introducing legislation to raise the minimum wage and make it easier to form a union. Americans are clearly ready for larger and more fundamental responses, everything from progressive tax reform to national industrial policy on trade and aggressive public investment in people's security. Only with big changes can we hope to achieve a society distinguished not by the number of millionaires but by the rising level of well-being of all its citizens.

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COMMENT

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Trying to Stay Out of Iran

When House Democratic leaders were designing legislation that attached a withdrawal deadline to $100 billion in supplemental funding for the Iraq War, they initially included a provision stating that President Bush couldn't use military force against Iran without obtaining a Congressional OK. For many Democrats, this was a no-brainer. At an issues retreat in early February, retired Gen. John Hoar had told House Democrats there was a high probability of military confrontation. Some Democratic legislators were looking to cut Bush off at the pass. "Once burned, shame on you; twice burned, shame on me," says liberal Representative Jim McDermott. But as John Larson, vice chair of the House Democratic caucus and co-sponsor of a similar Iran measure, recalls, "A funny thing happened on the way to the forum." The Iran provision was pulled out of the Iraq bill.

Appropriations Committee chair David Obey, who had drafted the Iran provision, had an explanation for disappointed fellow Democrats: He had concluded that it was poorly written and Bush could easily circumvent it. But several conservative Blue Dog Democrats had complained about limiting Bush's options regarding Iran, and Speaker Nancy Pelosi, looking for votes to pass the Iraq War spending bill, decided to appease them. (Her calculation paid off: The bill passed on a 218-to-212 vote.) Days after the Iran measure was yanked, an upset McDermott spoke at a meeting of House Democrats. "We have to make a decision," he recalls saying, "whether to leave this guy [Bush] with a blank check." Pelosi promised they'd have the chance to vote on the issue.

But politics and policy are in the details. Pelosi could greenlight a stand-alone bill compelling Bush to seek Congressional authority before initiating military action, or she could attach such language to a piece of must-pass legislation, such as the defense authorization bill. House Democrats may not have enough votes to pass separate legislation. Last June Representative Maurice Hinchey proposed an amendment that would have prohibited military action against Iran unless Congress first declared war. It was soundly defeated, with forty-seven Democrats voting nay. (A year earlier Peter DeFazio won only 136 votes for a similar measure.) Although the Democrats have since gained the majority, House aides estimate that there are still dozens of Democrats who would not vote for such a measure. And only five Republicans have supported legislation proposed by Republican Walter Jones that would allow the President to use military force against Iran only after receiving "specific authorization" from Congress (unless Iran attacks the United States or is about to do so). Moreover, Democrat Tom Lantos, chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, is pushing legislation to intensify sanctions against Iran; and some Democrats would prefer to see get-tough action define their party's Iran policy, not legislation limiting Bush's power.

House Democratic aides note the possibility of combining sanctions with restrictions on Bush. But that would not be to the liking of AIPAC, the powerhouse pro-Israel lobby, which has declared the Lantos bill a top priority. In a recent speech AIPAC executive director Howard Kohr said that legislation restricting Bush's options would be "a sign of weakness." Asked if he can

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COMMENT

point to a political fight lost by AIPAC recently, Representative Larson replied, "Not to my recollection." But if Pelosi tucks an Iran provision into a compulsory bill, it will have a better chance.

In the Senate, freshman Democrat James Webb has introduced legislation to prohibit Bush from striking Iran without Congressional authority unless it's to counter actual or imminent attack. After taking office Webb reviewed Bush's signing statement for the bill granting him permission to use force against Iraq and saw that Bush insisted he had "constitutional authority to use force" to "respond to aggression or other threats to U.S. interests." This claim was "so broad," Webb thought, that Congress had to prevent Bush from applying it to Iran. Webb had hoped to include his bill in the Senate's Iraq-funding legislation, but the legislation was passed without it. Majority leader Harry Reid supports the idea underlying Webb's proposal. But some Democrats fear that such initiatives imply that Bush has the authority to attack Iran unless Congress declares otherwise, and that if a bill like Webb's were defeated, Bush's hand would be strengthened. "I understand the concern," says Webb, "and I'm not taking any options off the table, just trying to rein in a trigger-happy President."

But before Iran comes Iraq. House and Senate Democrats must still work out a compromise that resolves the differences in each body's Iraq measure. Then they may find themselves in a constitutional showdown with a veto-wielding President. This won't leave much time for a debate over Iran. Given rising tensions between the Administration and Tehran, DeFazio says, "we may not even get to send the President a message before something happens."

DAVID CORN

How to Get Out of Iraq

Both houses of Congress have now backed a timeline for withdrawal of US combat troops from Iraq in 2008, which George W. Bush has vowed to veto. He gives two major rationales for rejecting withdrawal. At times he has warned that Iraq could become an Al Qaeda stronghold, at others that "a contagion of violence could spill out across the country—and in time, the entire region could be drawn into the conflict." These are bogeymen with which Bush has attempted to frighten the public. Regarding the first, Turkey, Jordan and Iran are not going to put up with an Al Qaeda stronghold on their borders; nor would Shiite and Kurdish Iraqis. Most Sunni Iraqis are relatively secular, and there are only an estimated 1,000 foreign jihadis in Iraq, who would be forced to return home if the Americans left.

Bush's ineptitude *has* made a regional proxy war a real possibility, so the question is how to avoid it. One Saudi official admitted that if the United States withdrew and Iraq's Sunnis seemed in danger, Riyadh would likely intervene. Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul has threatened to invade if Iraq's Kurds declare independence. And Iran would surely try to rescue Iraqi Shiites if they seemed on the verge of being massacred.

But Bush is profoundly in error to think that continued US military occupation can forestall further warfare. Sunni Arabs perceive the Americans to have tortured them, destroyed several of their cities and to be keeping them under siege at the behest of the joint Shiite-Kurdish government of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki. American missteps have steadily driven more and more Sunnis to violence and the support of violence. The Pentagon's own polling shows that between 2003 and 2006 the percentage of Sunni Arabs who thought attacking US troops was legitimate grew from 14 to more than 70.

The US repression of Sunnis has allowed Shiites and Kurds to avoid compromise. The Sunnis in Parliament have demanded that the excesses of de-Baathification be reversed (thousands of Sunnis have been fired from jobs just because they belonged to the Baath Party). They have been rebuffed. Sunnis rejected the formation of a Shiite super-province in the south. Shiites nevertheless pushed it through Parliament. The Kurdish leadership has also dismissed Sunni objections to their plans to annex the oil-rich province of Kirkuk, which has a significant Arab population.

The key to preventing an intensified civil war is US withdrawal from the equation so as to force the parties to an accommodation. Therefore, the United States should announce its intention to withdraw its military forces from Iraq, which will bring Sunnis to the negotiating table and put pressure on Kurds and Shiites to seek a compromise with them. But a simple US departure would not be enough; the civil war must be negotiated to a settlement, on the model of the conflicts in Northern Ireland and Lebanon.

Talks require a negotiating partner. The first step in Iraq must therefore be holding provincial elections. In the first and only such elections, held in January 2005, the Sunni Arab parties declined to participate. Provincial governments in Sunni-majority provinces are thus uniformly unrepresentative, and sometimes in the hands of fundamentalist Shiites, as in Diyala. A newly elected provincial Sunni Arab political class could stand in for the guerrilla groups in talks, just as Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army, did in Northern Ireland.

The United States took a step in the right direction by attending the March Baghdad summit of Iraq's neighbors and speaking directly to Iran and Syria about Iraqi security. Now the United States and Britain should work with the United Nations or the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to call a six-plus-two meeting on the model of the generally successful December 2001 Bonn conference on Afghanistan. The Iraqi government, including the president and both vice presidents, would meet directly with the foreign ministers of Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to discuss the ways regional actors could help end the war as the United States and Britain prepare to depart. Unlike the Baghdad summit, this conference would have to issue a formal set of plans and commitments. Recent Saudi consultations with Iranian leaders should be extended.

The Saudi government should then be invited to reprise the role it played in brokering an end to the Lebanese civil war at Taif in 1989, at which communal leaders hammered out a new national compact, which involved political power-sharing and demobilization of most militias. At Taif II, the elected provincial governors of Iraq and leaders of the major parliamentary blocs should be brought together. Along with the US and British ambassadors to Baghdad and representatives of the UN and the OIC, observers from Iraq's six neighbors should also be there.

Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah has credibility with Iraq's

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COMMENT

Sunnis, especially now that he has denounced the US occupation as illegitimate. They could trust his representations, which would include Saudi development aid in places like Anbar province. Since the Sunnis are the main drivers of violence in Iraq, it is they who must be mollified, bribed, cajoled and threatened into a settlement. The Shiites will have to demobilize the Mahdi Army and Badr Organization as well, and Iran will have to commit to working with the Maliki government to make that happen. A UN peacekeeping force, perhaps with the OIC (where Malaysia recently proffered troops), would be part of the solution.

On the basis of a settlement at Taif II, the US military should then negotiate with provincial authorities a phased withdrawal from the Sunni Arab provinces. The Sunnis will have to understand that this departure is a double-edged sword, since if they continued their guerrilla war, the United States could not protect them from Kurdish or Shiite reprisals. Any UN or OIC presence would be for peacekeeping and could not be depended on for active peace-enforcing. The rewards from neighbors promised at Taif II should be granted in a phased fashion and made dependent on good-faith follow-through by Iraqi leaders.

From all this the Sunni Arabs would get an end to the US occupation—among their main demands—as well as an end to de-Baathification and political marginalization. They would have an important place in the new order and be guaranteed their fair share of the national wealth. Shiites and Kurds would get an end to a debilitating civil war, even if they have to give up some of their maximal demands. The neighbors would avoid a reprise of the destructive Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s, which killed perhaps a million people and deeply damaged regional economies. And by ending its occupation, the United States would go a long way toward repairing its relations with the Arab and Muslim world and thus eliminate one of Al Qaeda's chief recruiting tools. A withdrawal is risky, but on the evidence so far, for the US military to remain in Iraq is a sure recipe for disaster. JUAN COLE

Juan Cole (www.juancole.com), a professor of Middle Eastern and South Asian history at the University of Michigan, is author of the forthcoming Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East *(Palgrave Macmillan).*

CALVIN TRILLIN

On the News That Mitt Romney Finished First Among Republicans in First-Quarter Fundraising

To play the role of President Mitt fit:
His jaw is square. No wives have ever split.
His mug's unblemished by the smallest zit.
On looks alone a jury would acquit.
But Mitt's campaign was not seen as a hit.
On every poll he lagged by quite a bit.
Then donor forms all candidates submit
Revealed a bunch of money went to Mitt.
(Which means each donor holds from Mitt a chit)
So Mitt as candidate is now legit.
The pundits now aren't writing Mitt's obit.
If one thing counts, they think, then money's it.

Protecting the Vote

Election protection activists are already busy promoting legislative fixes designed to assure that all eligible Americans can vote *and* get those votes counted in 2008. It's vital work. But if we are serious about addressing what's wrong with our electoral system, we must look backward as well—to what happened in Florida's 13th Congressional District last year.

That contest was "decided" for Republican Vern Buchanan over Democrat Christine Jennings following a recount that put Buchanan up by 369 votes. What the recount did not resolve, however, were questions raised by apparent voting machine malfunctions in Sarasota County, a base of strength for Jennings. Machines manufactured by Election Systems & Software Inc. (ES&S) recorded 18,000 "undervotes"—ballots with votes cast for other positions but not for the House seat—in precincts that tended to favor Jennings.

Republicans claim the dramatic disparity—nearly 13 percent of ballots registered no House vote—can be explained by Floridians' lack of interest in the Buchanan-Jennings race, despite its being one of the most expensive and closely watched contests of the year. But, argues the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, "while some have speculated that people simply chose not to vote in the District 13 race, many voters say the unusual undervote was caused by badly designed touch-screen ballots, which they say hid the race or made it hard to verify if they had cast their vote."

Local election officials, along with ES&S representatives, defended the machines and Buchanan's slim majority through a flawed recount process that cleared the way for the Republican to be seated in January. Two months later, however, it was revealed that Sarasota officials had been informed by ES&S months before the election of serious concerns regarding the response time of the voting machines. Amazingly, those officials decided in secret not to make the recommended repairs or to train poll workers and voters to deal with confusion caused by the machines.

When the memo detailing the machine malfunctions surfaced, Florida's nine Democratic US House members asked the House Administration Committee, which oversees election disputes, to open an investigation. "That these revelations are coming to light now, through press reports, suggests that the potential for fraud in this election was real, that it was known by the responsible officials and that these officials did nothing about it," they wrote. "Further, that these reports came to light through press reports strongly suggests that this investigation is far from complete."

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Committee chair Juanita Millender-McDonald, a California Democrat, immediately created a task force to review what went wrong in Florida and how the House should respond. Under the Constitution the House and Senate are responsible for determining whether members have been legitimately elected. It is within the power of the House to declare the seat vacant and force a new vote in the 13th District—a move for which there are precedents, including a 1975 statewide revote of a New Hampshire Senate contest. That's what Jennings has demanded.

House Republicans, apparently fearful for Buchanan's chances in a fair election, have sought to delay the task force's work. But the Democrats shouldn't be deterred by such tactics or by their own consultants, some of whom quietly suggest that letting Buchanan finish his term would position Jennings to highlight the flawed process and run as a victim in 2008. The principle at stake is too important to allow either party to play politics. If malfunctioning voting machines and irresponsible election officials are allowed to determine who sits in the House, no American will be able to cast a ballot with confidence in 2008. JOHN NICHOLS

AIPAC Alternative?

You might call it the Great Jewish Hope. This is the belief that because Jewish public opinion is well to the left of mainstream Jewish organizations on such questions as the Iraq War and a two-state solution in Israel and Palestine, the misrepresentation has to end. Someday soon, the grassroots Jews are going to say Enough, and the hawkish leaders will turn into pillars of salt. Any day now.

The Great Jewish Hope has risen again this spring because of several new signs of dissatisfaction with the leadership. "There is a growing realization that the more hawkish elements of the pro-Israel community—I'm picking my words because it's a minefield—have too much of an influence within that community," says Ori Nir of Americans for Peace Now. Adds Charney Bromberg of Meretz USA, "The issue to me is what I believe has been a gross failure on the part of the leadership."

So far it's just rumblings. When Senator Barack Obama was pressured in March into backtracking on a sympathetic statement he made about Palestinians, there was grousing even in Jewish quarters about "the Israel lobby." Around the same time, two articles appeared, one by financier George Soros in *The New York Review of Books*, the other by *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, both arguing that open debate of Israel's policies was being suppressed and that this was bad for all concerned.

Soros has a special status. It was rumored that the financier might be the actual Great Jewish Hope: that he would fund an alternative Jewish lobby challenging the two leading Jewish organizations, which take an Israel-right-or-wrong position: the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. Soros has absented himself from that effort, partly because he hasn't been identified enough with Jewish causes, he says. Still, talk of an alternative lobby continues.

Mitchell Plitnick of Oakland-based Jewish Voice for Peace says: "Efforts are definitely continuing, not as fast as some might hope. There is major Jewish money coming to the Democrats that does support peace, but there's no lobby to focus it." Focusing Jewish political money is what AIPAC has long done. Though it is not a PAC, it has a huge membership of individual donors it can claim to represent when pressing Congress to adopt legislation that makes Israel out to be the good guy in the Middle East.

The people who talk about an alternative lobby don't want to smash AIPAC. Bromberg, who has been involved in the talks, notes, "There is profound concern that Israel is still desperately alone and vulnerable in the world, despite its military strength and economic strength, and its one real political strength is the relationship to the United States."

Still, left-wing Jews feel alienated from Jewish organizations that supported two disasters—the Iraq War and Israel's war in Lebanon. "The virtually unqualified support of organized American Jewry for Israel's brutal actions…is not new but now no longer tolerable to me," Sara Roy, a scholar at Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, writes in a new book, *The War on Lebanon*. Roy's views are increasingly common. Dan Fleshler, an activist in the pro-Israel peace community, says that Middle East violence has helped awaken a large "universe" of liberal, politically active Jews. "Many of them are alienated from Israel and want nothing to do with it," he says. "Maybe the most important thing to them is the Sierra Club. They're cultural Jews, they've never been involved" with Israel per se. Their passivity has allowed right-wing Jews who care more about the issue to affect policy. Fleshler says the challenge to an alternative lobby is figuring out how to capture "the moderate Jewish left" on Israel issues.

Tapping into the restlessness among young left-wing Jews might be a place to start. "I meet these kids all the time on campuses all over the country," says author Ali Abunimah. "This generation of young Jews is not as tied to the romantic *Exodus* story of their parents. They want a free and open debate about the rights and wrongs of supporting a country that privileges people based on arbitrary characteristics."

Jewish peace groups involved in the lobby talks are apprehensive about these new currents. Those groups want to bolster support for Zionism even as they try to undo the forty-year occupation. Bromberg likens the discussion about Israel to a backed-up swamp full of noxious ideas—from critiques of the Israel lobby to calls for a one-state solution. "All of this is happening because the process has been so stagnant for so long," he argues, and blames the American Jewish leadership for not openly questioning some of Israel's decisions.

Yet here we are, in what Bromberg agrees is a time of *perestroika* for American Jews who want to criticize Israel. What are the electoral consequences? Joe Trippi, who managed Howard Dean's presidential campaign, says that the Democratic base is dividing in ways that recall the Lamont-Lieberman battle of last summer, when many major Jewish donors stuck with Lieberman even after he lost the primary. "You're starting to see more and more division in the base even among supporters of Israel over [the Iraq] war," he says. "It's a split, it's a schism.… It's more like a family squabble at the dining table. No one wants a divorce."

The Great Jewish Hope is that the liberal Jewish money in the

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political process will separate itself from hawkish Jewish money. Steve Rabinowitz, a Democratic consultant in DC, describes the potential pool: "AIPAC is enormous in terms of influence, in terms of guiding the money. The numbers are gigantic…whether you support them or not, you have to be awed by the success when you see it in action. And yet I think there is even more Jewish money that is not AIPAC affected, affiliated, just because there is so damn much money that happens to be Jewish."

So far, the Soros article is the biggest sign of such a divide. His defection has created concern in the Jewish leadership that American politicians will cease to think of Jewish money as a monolith supporting a hard line for Israel, thus granting the politicians more freedom to try out better ideas. Indeed, when I talked to AIPAC spokesman Josh Block, he pointed me, unprompted, to printed criticisms of Soros's claims.

"The danger for AIPAC is that once Humpty Dumpty drops off the wall, you can't put him together again," says Abunimah. "And what is keeping the debate from happening now is political brute force. That's what we see in the Obama case."

In March an activist at a small gathering in Muscatine, Iowa, asked Obama about his views on the Palestinians, and he answered that they were suffering more than Jews. A reporter for the *Des Moines Register* printed the statement, and it was widely circulated. Several activists condemned Obama, and Obama promptly retrenched. "Hillary is very practiced about talking about these things," says AIPAC's Block. "Obama's lexicon is broader. People are going to be hurt" by that kind of statement.

The Obama episode creates despair among those who want to get Arab grievances taken seriously in American politics. But Plitnick says the only answer is to work with the people who are most involved in the issue: Jews. "There's a strong sentiment on the left that says, Forget about the Jewish community, they don't listen," says Plitnick. "But politically that's impossible. I don't think we'll be able to stem the influence of AIPAC without Jews taking a major leadership role in doing that." The birth of an alternative lobby, he notes, would be a major turning point in American politics. And it's going to happen. Any day now. PHILIP WEISS

Philip Weiss writes frequently on Mideast issues for The Nation.

Getting the Lead Out

For most readers outside Rhode Island, Sheldon Whitehouse is known for being the newly elected Democratic senator who replaced Republican Lincoln Chafee, thereby helping the Democrats take control of the Senate. But for the people of Rhode Island, Whitehouse is also known as the former State Attorney General who initiated what is proving to be one of the most important public health victories of the past century.

Early this year Judge Michael Silverstein issued a ruling affirming a jury verdict in the longest civil trial in Rhode Island history. The jury held three lead pigment manufacturers responsible for an environmental and public health tragedy that over the past century has caused lead poisoning among tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of children, who ingested lead dust and flakes of decaying lead paint from the walls of houses and public buildings before it was banned in 1978. This is a groundbreaking decision, for it is the first time the industry has been held accountable for the terrible toll lead pigment has taken. It also marks the first effective strategy for actually ending the nightmare of lead poisoning.

For much of the past century, public health officials have dealt with lead poisoning by treating children with high lead levels in their blood. Damage from lead poisoning is permanent, and treatment to prevent further damage by removing kids from their homes or detoxifying them through chelation therapy (an intrusive method requiring repeated hospitalization) is palliative at best. More often than not, children have been sent back into homes only to be poisoned again.

The lawsuit brought by Whitehouse in 1999 proposed a new approach: Drawing on a host of documents from the Lead Industries Association (LIA), the pigment producers' trade group, the suit contended that the industry knew lead was a dangerous product for nearly a century and therefore bears some responsibility not only for paying for the care of poisoned kids but also for preventing the poisoning of future generations. The state, with the assistance of a huge plaintiffs' lawsuit, sued four pigment manufacturers—Sherwin Williams, NL Industries, Millennium Holdings and Atlantic Richfield—arguing that the industry should be held accountable for having knowingly sold a dangerous product to millions of homeowners. With historians presenting abundant documentation, the jury learned that the LIA not only knew lead paint was "a slow, cumulative poison" but discussed in private meetings the fact that kids were dying. The jury learned that despite many medical journal articles detailing deaths—and comas—from the early 1900s on, manufacturers continued to market lead paint as a safe and sanitary product for use on the walls, woodwork and windowsills of children's rooms and schools, and even on toys. The jury decided to hold the industry accountable for having created a "public nuisance" and ordered, with Judge Silverstein affirming, three of the companies to "remedy" the public health problem by removing lead paint throughout the state. Since at least 240,000 of Rhode Island's homes are covered in lead paint, the bill will be anywhere from $1.5 billion to $4 billion. The judge called for the naming of a "special master," an expert capable of aiding him in deciding how to remove the paint.

While the industry will undoubtedly appeal the verdict to the State Supreme Court, the decision will have far-reaching public health implications. Already other states and communities are beginning suits based on the same legal principles that underlie this victory. In the words of state counsel Jack McConnell, the principle was simple: "If you help make a mess, you have to help clean it up." For industry in general the message is even more stark: If you knowingly harm people, you will be held accountable. For the nation as a whole it is a good sign that Whitehouse, now a senator, is willing to take chances and hold a powerful industry to account.

DAVID ROSNER AND GERALD MARKOWITZ

David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz, the authors of Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution, *teach at Columbia University and John Jay College/CUNY, respectively. They both served as expert witnesses on behalf of the state in the Rhode Island case.*

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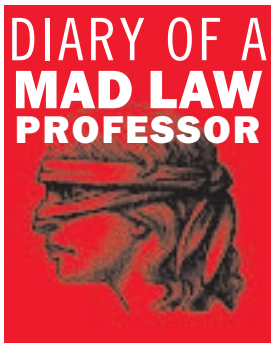
PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

Colorstruck



The March 22 *New York Post* offered a fascinating study in the contradictions of our culture. The top half of the front page was consumed by "a stunning mother-child portrait" of Angelina Jolie with her newest adopted child, or as the *Post* put it, her "Viet man." The lower half of the page was given over to a more lurid headline ("Baby Bungle: White Folks' Black Child") trumpeting "a Park Avenue fertility clinic's blunder" that "left a family devastated—after a black baby was born to a Hispanic woman and her white husband."

The story about Jolie's magical mothering of her rainbow brood was a fairy tale of happily ever after. The bungled baby story, meanwhile, was considerably less heartwarming: Long Islanders Nancy and Thomas Andrews had trouble conceiving after the birth of their first daughter. They employed in vitro fertilization and baby Jessica was born. Jessica is darker skinned than either of the Andrewses, a condition their obstetrician initially called an "abnormality." She'll "lighten up," said that good doctor. Subsequent paternity tests showed that Nancy's egg was fertilized by sperm other than Tom's. The couple has sued.

If this were the end, the story might simply fall within the growing body of other technological mix-ups resulting in what are sometimes called "wrongful birth" suits, for lost eggs, failed vasectomies and so on. There is a legally recognized expectation that a certain standard of care will be observed in the handling of genetic material. There are ethical difficulties with any of these cases. Just to start with, it's a bit of a conundrum to call the birth of a healthy child "wrongful." Therefore, courts tend to be conservative in framing monetary damages, lest they be understood as a property interest in perfection. Hence, awarding the costs of raising an unplanned child resulting from medical malfeasance is obviously less troubling than awarding damages for "the pain and suffering" of parenting a child who was "unwanted." Indeed, in the Andrews case, a judge permitted the malpractice claim to go forward but threw out the claim for the parents' mental distress.

What's distinctive about the Andrews case is that the parents also tried to cite (also without success) Jessica's pain and suffering for having to endure life as a black person. The Andrewses expressed concern that Jessica "may be subjected to physical and emotional illness as a result of not being the same race as her parents and siblings." They are "distressed" that she is "not even the same race, nationality, color…as they are." They describe Jessica's conception as a "mishap" so "unimaginable" that they have not told many of their relatives. (Telling the tabloids all about it must have come easier.) "We fear that our daughter will be the object of scorn and ridicule by other children," the couple said, because Jessica has "characteristics more typical of African or African-American descent." So "while we love Baby Jessica as our own, we are reminded of this terrible mistake each and every time we look at her…each and every time we appear in public."

One wonders what this construction of affairs will do to Jessica, now 2, when she is old enough to understand. But here's the really interesting part. When I turned to other media accounts I found a picture of the family—from their 2006 Christmas card, no less. And Jessica looks exactly like her mother and elder sister. It is true that Jessica is slightly darker than her mother and that her hair is curlier than her sister's, but all three females are pretty clearly African-descended. As one of my students put it, if anything it is the paleness of the father's skin that marks him as the "different" one.

The picture underscores the embedded cultural oddities of this case, the invisibly shifting boundaries of how we see race, extend intimacy, name "difference." According to the *Post*, Mrs. Andrews is "Hispanic" and apparently, by the paper's calculations, one Hispanic woman plus one white man equals "a white pair." The mother is "a light-skinned native of the Dominican Republic," seeming to indicate that while she may not be "white," she's also not "black." Each narrative implies that if the correct sperm had been used, the Andrewses would have been guaranteed a lighter-skinned child. But as most Dominicans trace their heritage to some mixture of African slaves, indigenous islanders and European settlers, and as dark skin color is a dominant trait, it could be that the true sperm donor is as "white" as Mr. Andrews. But that possibility is exiled from the word boxes that contain this child. Not only is Jessica viewed as being of a race apart from either of her parents; she is even designated a different nationality—this latter most startling for its blood-line configuration of citizenship itself.

I might have consigned all of this to tabloid sensation had I not had conversations in recent days in which this case came up. Well-educated legal minds of all political stripes were arguing that there's nothing wrong in the parents' claim, that it's a private choice they made to have a family that looks "like" them and that they should get some money for the girl's "trauma" since, after all, it is harder to be black in this society. Some of the people arguing this have previously argued against affirmative action because our society is supposedly colorblind. Just look at Angelina! If this dreamy reasoning is any reflection of the culture at large, then its logic signals a privatization of civil rights: Discrimination is no longer a social problem that implicates all of us and our institutions as unloving or uninclusive. Discrimination becomes destiny, the normative response to biologized "abnormality."

It is ironic. There is a bill in the Georgia state legislature to make April Confederate Heritage Month. Not Southern heritage, but Confederate. Whatever romance that term may conjure in the collective imagination, it's important to remember that the Confederate Constitution was almost identical to that of the United States. The only significantly different provision was one that said: "No bill of attainder, ex post facto law, or law denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves shall be passed." In an era when none of us are slaves but all of us are increasingly objects in the marketplace, it is sad and alarming that "Negro" features, however arbitrarily perceived or shiftily delineated, still lower the value of the human product, of human grace. ■

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ERIC ALTERMAN

The Politics of Pundit Prestige…

Back in the pre-Internet days of yore, political punditry was the best job in journalism and one of the best anywhere. You could spout off on anything you wanted, and almost nobody would call you on it, much less find a place to publish and prove you wrong. And once you had established yourself as "credible," it required little work, save coming up with a few semi-memorable phrases. (George Will's *chef-d'oeuvre* was opining that the Reagan Administration "loved commerce more than it loathed Communism.") With the advent of television talk shows, riches arrived in the form of corporate speaking gigs that paid tens of thousands of dollars an hour just to say the same damn thing you said on television. When Fred Barnes famously pronounced on *The McLaughlin Group*, "I can speak to almost anything with a lot of authority," he was right, at least to the degree that he was really saying, "I can speak to almost anything without anyone pointing out how full of shit I usually am."

The advent of the Internet—particularly the blogosphere—has changed all that. Now, not only are the things pundits say and write preserved for posterity; there are legions of folks who track pundit pronouncements, fact-check their statements and compare them with previous utterances on the same and similar topics. They also demand a degree of transparency about methods of inquiry and the reasoning behind conclusions drawn. While proving pundits wrong—over and over and over—has not yet cost anyone a job, it has contributed to a precipitous decline in pundit prestige. The reaction to this decline varies from pundit to pundit, to be sure, but more often than not, it bespeaks a kind of panic.

America's most powerful and influential television journalist, NBC's Tim Russert, has taken a real blogosphere beating of late for his Libby trial admission that while, yes, he does consider himself to be a journalist, he does not think it proper to ask any news-related questions of top Bush Administration officials when they happen to phone him because, well, it's bad manners. (Libby was foolishly calling Russert to instruct him to shut up Chris Matthews.) His response? "Bloggers," said Russert in a recent speech, "all force candidates to accept a position, to play [an adversarial] role." This, unfortunately, in Russert's view, "puts pressure on those of us in the mainstream media [if we're not] sufficiently adversarial." Bad bloggers, bad.

Similarly, Tom Friedman's pleasant, well-remunerated life as America's most important foreign affairs columnist since Walter Lippmann would presumably be even pleasanter were he not consistently reminded of his proclivity to pronounce "the next six months in Iraq" to be the do-or-die period for the Bush Administration. (He did so four times during a single twelve-month period, as many in the blogosphere frequently note.) You can find the term "Friedman Unit"—also known as "one Friedman" or "one F.U."—in Wikipedia, credited to Atrios, as referring to "six months in the future." More broadly, "many political observers measure any date-specific statement by a public figure regarding the future of Iraq or the Iraq War in Friedman Units, thus suggesting that the speaker's predictions of a near-term resolution of the Iraq War amount to that speaker's de facto defense of the status quo."

How does the fabulously wealthy and influential Friedman defend his faulty analyses? He doesn't. Asked about them on CNN, Friedman complained that his critics—on the left and the right—just "want to be proven right."

The "left and right" dodge is particularly popular with pundits who wish to avoid responsibility for what they say and do. You can find Howard Kurtz, frequently criticized in the blogosphere for his glaring conflicts of interest—he reports on CNN for the *Washington Post* and on the *Washington Post* for CNN and to top it all off is married to a Republican political consultant and *National Review* contributor—taking the same tack. Though it may "disappoint people on both the left and the right," Kurtz responds, he is not "a super-opinionated ideologue who is going to tear down news organizations because they don't see the world as I do." Similarly, in a lengthy exchange in *The Politico* between the writers and editors of that publication and the liberal watchdog Media Matters for America over some of the former's inarguable (and admitted) journalistic lapses, ex–*Washington Post* political editor John Harris noted, "When something is so freighted with either left-wing or right-wing baggage, there is a tendency in most newsrooms to simply dismiss it as so much ranting." Harris appears to believe that this is a proper response. You see, MSM reporters have no "ideology"—which was why, presumably, they were able to report so many of George W. Bush's ideologically inspired lies about Iraq and other issues without thinking to question them.

Still, the folks at *The Politico* look admirably open-minded and eager to engage their critics compared with the likes of, say, *Time*'s Joe Klein. My previous criticism of Klein's work—and only his work—resulted in a hysterical hate-filled interview he offered a blogger named Rory O'Connor. More recently on my Media Matters blog, Altercation, I reprinted without comment Klein's apparently airtight December 2000 prediction that "given the circumstances, there is only one possible governing strategy [for George W. Bush]: a quiet, patient, and persistent bipartisanship." I noted, in addition, how few of the large stable of columnists employed by *Time* had demonstrated the good sense to oppose George Bush's war. Klein responded with another series of schoolyard insults, terming yours truly "obsessed," "still-obsessed," "futile and pathetic," "still pathetic," "still after" him, "a suck-up," "intellectually dishonest," "not reliable" and full of "non-stop crap."

Perhaps I am. Still, the problem persists. To put it bluntly, most MSM pundits are lazy, ill informed and in thrall to the specious arguments of the powerful people they are supposed to critique. The punditocracy may not like the blogosphere's diagnosis, but there is really only one way to get it off its collective back: Work harder, do a better job. It's really that simple. ■

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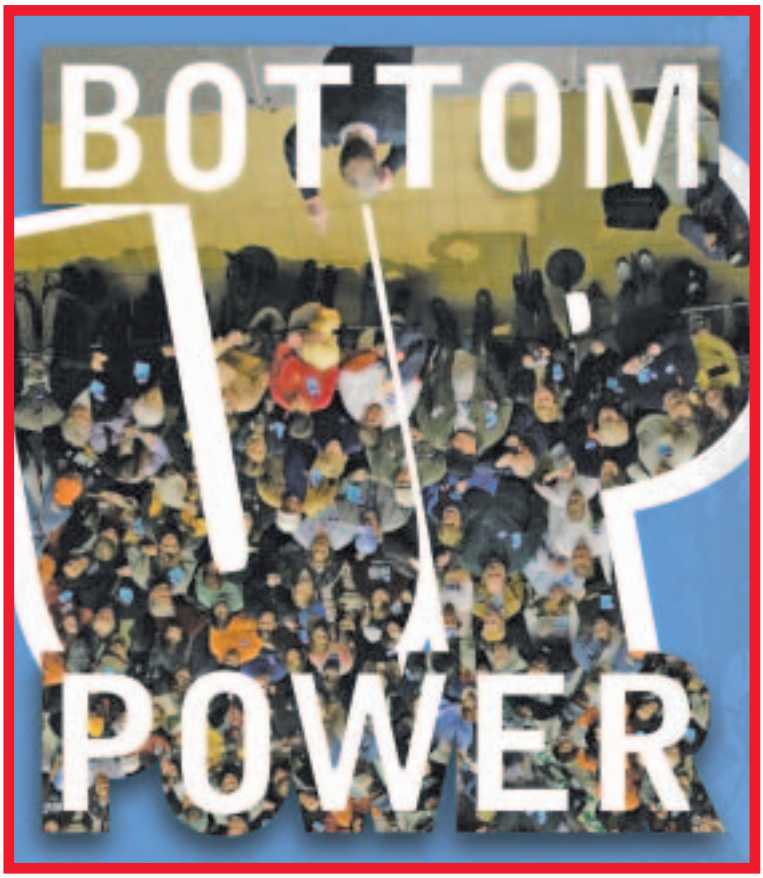

GRASSROOTS DEMS TAKE BACK POLITICS FROM THE POLITICIANS

by LAURA FLANDERS

An odd thing happens on the way to an American election. For months politicians talk about the importance of voters, voting and the power of majorities. Then on election night—wham—suddenly the only person who matters is the candidate. Thanks to media that cover elections as if they were races, all the attention goes to the horses; there's little left for the people in the stands. Consider what happened in the wake of the Republican rout in the 2006 midterm elections. Just days after election night, the Sunday-morning TV talk shows were in full gallop, training attention away from the hordes of people and the organizing that had just flipped both houses of Congress and focusing instead on the few politicians who might be expected to run for President.

The brighter the spotlight on the candidate, the dimmer the darkness that falls on everyone else. Take Montana. The first Democrat to win the governorship in sixteen years, Brian Schweitzer, sparked breathless talk about a "Montana Miracle" when he won office in 2004, the same year that Democrats gained power in both chambers of state government after twelve years of GOP dominance. The national public heard more about Schweitzer's bolo tie and boots than they did about his politics—but no matter, when his protégé Jon Tester pulled off a nail-biter win in the Senate two years later, Democratic hopes rose even higher. Maybe the Montana magic will rub off and herald Democratic victories across the West.

When the Democrats hold their national convention in Denver in 2008, Schweitzer and Tester are bound to be headliners. "The future is wearing a turquoise bolo tie wrapped around the open collar of a blue-and-white-striped button-down dress shirt," began a typical article on Schweitzer in *Salon*. Tester, an organic farmer with a big frame and a flattop haircut, has stimulated similar style-over-substance talk. But the big men are not all that's going on in the Big Sky state. To talk about a one- or even a two-man miracle is to ignore what's really interesting about politics in Montana. As two local feminists, Judy Smith and Terry Kendrick, put it in their essay "Revisiting the Montana Miracle," "rather than a miracle [what happened in '04] was closer to a perfect storm." As I discovered during my travels out West last spring, what's been happening there may indeed have lessons for national Democrats—but not if the analysis stops with the candidates.

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The day I arrive in Missoula, in March 2006, I meet a bright, blond athlete named Betsy Hands. As we drive around town, Hands tells me she is a former Peace Corps volunteer and environmental scientist who spent years in various African countries and once led wilderness trips for Outward Bound. She is program director at homeWORD, a community housing organization that helps low-income women and families buy affordable homes. She's also a competitive telemark skier and, oh yes, she's running for office, a seat in the State Assembly. "Somebody's got to step up, and why not me?" Hands tells me cheerfully. It's an attitude I hear a lot in this state.

On March 8 at the Missoula Women's Day Potluck, trestle tables sag under the array of food. A cheerful noise spurts from a childcare room next door. Around the hall, women's groups working on violence, healthcare and workplace discrimination are scattered about. What they have in common, I gradually learn, is that they are all members of something called Montana Women Vote, a coalition of ten statewide women's organizations focused on increasing women's participation in elections and encouraging women to run for office. This isn't presidential election season; it's eight months before a Congressional midterm race, yet on just about every table there is something about voting, a flier for a fundraiser or an invitation to attend a training for candidates. Voter registration forms are everywhere.

In '94 Montana Democrats found themselves in the same fix that national Dems woke up to in '02: 'out in the wilderness, lost.'

"The thing I often say about electoral politics is that I never thought I'd find myself doing it," Judy Smith told me the next day. Smith is a longtime activist and a founder, with Terry Kendrick, of Montana Women Vote. "I was part of that radical contingent in the 1960s and '70s which thought that electoral politics was not something that would make real change," continued Smith. Her beliefs haven't changed that much, but the possibility of affecting policy-makers through movement pressure has. In 1994 the Democratic Party in Montana found itself in the same fix that national Democrats woke up to in 2002: Out of power in both houses of the legislature and the governor's mansion, "we were out in the wilderness, lost, trying to figure out why we were lost," Tester's state director Bill Lombardi, a longtime Democratic consultant, recalled. Montana was once a comfortably Democratic state that had only returned one Republican to the Senate in its history, but its demographics and its economy had shifted such that a whole lot of traditional Democratic voters (women, blue-collar workers, low-income urban dwellers) had abandoned the Democratic Party, or the state. Republicans, meanwhile, were reaping the benefits of years of investment in Western states by the organized right, including the Christian Coalition and the corporate-backed Wise Use anti-environmentalist movement. In 1994, the year that swept Newt Gingrich to power, Montana Democrats won just thirty-three of 100 seats in the State Assembly and nineteen of fifty in the Senate.

Local women's groups, like homeWORD, had no allies left to lobby. "Instead of running into that wall over and over, we had to crack that wall open," said Smith. And they weren't the only ones who felt that way.

For most of the past 150 years, Montana was a mining and timber-run state. Pit-head derricks still rise above the dusty streets of Butte, once called "the richest hill on earth." Next to the mines today lurks a huge lake of acid-laced water, part of the nation's largest Superfund site. With the decline of mining and logging, an environmental movement has grown up that's part conservationist, part hunters and fishers and part citizens concerned about the toxins in their water. By the end of the 1990s, as Theresa Keaveny, executive director of Montana Conservation Voters, explains it, good environmental laws passed in the 1970s "had been gutted, and just working on lobbying and rule-making wasn't enough. We realized we had to change the policy-makers, and that demanded a political response. We had to elect people."

Long before the media spotlight hit their state in 2004, Montana Women Vote convened a Voter Summit to prepare for the 2004 election. In attendance were the state's biggest nonprofits responsible for conducting election-related work. According to Kendrick, the groups shared data, coordinated strategies and divvied up their turf so that the state was covered and individual groups weren't duplicating one another. The coordinated campaign of the Montana Democratic Party, the groups that made up the Voter Summit, and Native Vote, a powerful new group, registered 40,000 new Montana voters between the primary and the general election. In a gubernatorial race that was decided by just 19,703 votes, those numbers are huge. Because they didn't rely on bused-in volunteers and hadn't left the field in the intervening months, these same groups were able to draw on their base again for the hotly contested 2006 Tester versus Conrad Burns Senate race.

When it comes to campaigning, Democratic consultants typically recommend "broadening the electorate" (which usually means dashing for Republican voters) over deepening the "natural" base (the groups the party prefers to take for granted). More or less written off by the Democratic National Committee since Ronald Reagan won Montana in 1980, Democrats there have been mercifully spared DC advice. As a result, the state party has gone its own way. In the 1990s Democrats in the legislature initiated a routine (one that's shockingly unusual around the states) of meeting regularly with statewide officials, local party players and extra-party activists.

But the biggest change in Democratic fortunes came with the work of Native Americans, the state's largest minority group. Montana has seven Native American reservations and is home to eleven tribes. Natives are a small percentage of Montana's population (about 7 percent), but in some districts, and on the reservations, they are a 90 percent majority. They vote almost as solidly Democratic as African-Americans do—

Laura Flanders, the author of Bushwomen: How They Won the White House for Their Man *(Verso), is the host of* RadioNation *(www.radionation.org). This article is adapted from her new book,* Blue Grit: True Democrats Take Back Politics From the Politicians *(Penguin).*

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roughly 80 percent. *When* they vote. "We have felt powerless, and we've been told that we are powerless," said State Senator Carol Juneau, who grew up on a reservation and lives today on the Blackfeet Reservation in northwest Montana. On the reservation, Native people have their own elected tribal leaders. It has taken local activists years, said Juneau, to build any sense among the residents that there is reason to engage in politics outside the reservation. Besides, state authorities—and politicians of both parties—actively kept Indians out of the process. Voting-rights suits brought by aggrieved Native American voters in the 1980s and redistricting in 2003 created three new constituencies—two in the Senate and one in the House—in which Native voters predominated, and several more competitive districts across the state. The plan was overseen by Janine Pease Pretty on Top, one of the early voting-rights plaintiffs.

Instead of conducting outsider "outreach" to minority voters, Democrats in Montana gave enough resources directly to local Native American leaders that they could participate on an equal footing and build their own base. Pat Williams, a longtime US Congressman from Montana who worked energetically for Native rights, remembers the process: To start, "we gave that money to a virtually all-white, all-male consulting group in Helena.... They didn't consult. The effort collapsed." The next time around, over the objections of his political staff, Williams saw to it that GOTV money went straight to the reservations, into the hands of the local Native leadership. "I was assured by everybody that the Indians would drink the money. Instead they had the highest gain of any ethnic group in any state in registration and turnout."

In 2004 the Coordinated Campaign of the Montana Democratic Party hired a Democratic Party Tribal Coordinator. With help from Native Vote (a national initiative), voters were registered on each reservation and local candidates were recruited for statewide office, increasing voter interest and turnout. By election day, an estimated 4,000 new voters—about 10 percent of the voting reservation population—were newly registered, and more were running for office. The delegation sent to Helena after the 2004 election included eight Native Americans—the second highest number of Native legislators in any state, all Democrats. The lowest turnout of registered voters on any reservation was 46 percent, and the highest topped 64 percent. In 2006 the number of Native Americans winning election rose again, to ten—the most ever. On Juneau's Blackfeet Reservation, 83 percent of all voters went for Jon Tester. "It shows the power of the Indian vote in Montana," said Juneau, who was elected to the State Senate that same day.

Nationally, Democrats know low-income women are a target group, but at the state level few parties have the resources—or the relationships—to turn them out. Polls show that only about 30 percent of low-income women typically register to vote, let alone show up at the polls. In 2004 the member groups of Montana Women Vote exceeded their target of registering 5,000 new voters, especially low-income women in certain districts (they ended up registering 7,300). In 2006 they exceeded their goals again. Sharing public data acquired by their better-resourced friends at Montana Conservation Voters, the women say they learned how to cross-reference voting records with their own membership lists. "This isn't rocket science," said Judy Smith. Pooling their resources, Montana Women Vote volunteers contacted voters not once or twice but several times, and distributed voter guides. In 2004, 77 percent of the Montana Women Vote registrants voted—six points higher than the statewide turnout. In that year, Montana Women Vote alone turned out an estimated 5,600 new, disproportionately Democratic voters. Thanks to sophisticated tracking software, Theresa Keaveny was able to show that where Montana Conservation Voters was active, turnout was also higher than average: 84 percent of their registrants voted, according to Keaveny's data, as did 93 percent of their own members—a minimum of 30,000 votes. In 2006, for the first time, Montanans could register and vote on election day. Grassroots groups offering free bus rides to the polls helped boost turnout to more than 60 percent.

Grassroots organizers of every stripe know what grassroots organizers do. It's just very rarely written down.

Judy Smith is right. This stuff isn't rocket science. Grassroots organizers of every stripe know what grassroots activists do. It's just very rarely written down. When it comes to the right, liberal researchers pay close attention; they often draw complex, spidery maps plotting the political, financial and social networks that have made it possible for the right to grow. Yet when it comes to Democrats and their allies, liberal media tend to see only the top of the pyramid.

In the case of Montana, the popular liberal bloggers Jerome Armstrong and Markos Moulitsas didn't just overlook the role of movements in their account of the "miracle"; they actively disparaged them. "Montana Democrats nearly cut the issue groups out of their campaign efforts," wrote Armstrong and Moulitsas in their book *Crashing the Gate*. Calling it "a rare rebuke" of the issues groups inside the party, "but one that served the purposes of the long-suffering Montana Democratic Party," the bloggers alleged that Schweitzer "threw all of the [interest group] questionnaires in the garbage." Which allowed that, in their words, "Schweitzer and the rest of the Democratic ticket in Montana could stand on their own, unencumbered by whatever negative baggage those groups might bring."

All that is just plain bunk. Maybe Schweitzer tossed somebody's questionnaire in the trash, but according to the groups, he responded to the questionnaire from every "interest" group I've mentioned. Not only did Schweitzer respond to Montana Conservation Voters' questions; he met with them, before and after the election, and sought the endorsement of their PAC, along with the endorsement of the state AFL-CIO and the teachers' unions.

When I met with Schweitzer in the governor's mansion last spring, he knew the numbers on the women's vote precisely: "Montana Women Vote registered some 7,000 women

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to vote, many single women, and they probably voted 80/20 Democrat. There is another four or five thousand into the Democrat camp," he noted. "That's important." Brad Martin of the Montana Democrats told reporters after the election, "We reached out early to the prochoice community, the hunting and fishing community and folks from the labor movement, and we said, Look, you've got to be a part of this." After his election, Schweitzer created a new position in his Cabinet for an Indian Affairs coordinator and appointed women to top posts. In 2006 he appointed the freshly elected legislator Christine Kaufmann, co-director of the Montana Human Rights Network, an anti–hate group founded to combat militia violence in the late 1980s, to chair a newly established seven-member advisory council on civil rights.

The conventional wisdom about coattails would have you believe that the candidate at the top of the ticket always pulls those lower down in his or her wake. But take a closer look at who led whom to victory in Montana, and it's not so clear the one on top did the leading. If anything, the results indicate a bottom-up or reverse-coattails effect. Brian Schweitzer won with just over 50 percent of the vote in a four-way race. He won in seventeen of fifty-six counties, in traditional Democratic counties and on the Native American reservations. He did well, but not as well as some other Democratic statewide candidates. (A progressive state Supreme Court justice, Jim Nelson, won with increased support and a bigger margin than Schweitzer's.)

In several Democratic districts, progressive, grassroots-based state legislators outperformed the governor.

In several Democratic districts, progressive, grassroots-based state legislators outperformed the governor. In Helena, the two most progressive people on the ballot won with more votes and a bigger margin of victory: Christine Kaufmann and Mary Caferro, a single mother of four and former welfare recipient who directs a low-income families group, WEEL (Working for Equality and Economic Liberation), dedicated to the eradication of poverty. Schweitzer won 65 and 54 percent of the district vote, respectively, in Kaufmann's and Caferro's districts in 2004; they won 71 and 58 percent.

Candidacies like these are just what traditional party consultants hate. They're risky, rely on mobilizing atypical voters and raise issues that challenge the center and the right. But sometimes the campaign is the point, says Kaufmann's co-director at the Montana Human Rights Network, Ken Toole. "Sometimes the most important question is not Can you win, but Can you provide an alternative and use a campaign to advance a message," he tells me. "That's what the right has done for decades. They run not to win but to campaign."

Montana's a state where a little money goes a long, long way, and most legislative campaigns cost $10,000 max. In 2000, when Kaufmann and Toole both took leave from their jobs to run for office (she for the House, he for the State Senate), they both won. And they've won ever since. An out lesbian (only the second in the Montana legislature) in a district that includes not only a Catholic college but also a cathedral, Kaufmann won a four-way primary with 49 percent of the vote and then trounced her Republican opponent, a fundraiser for Catholic Charities. Term-limited in the Senate, Toole ran for a seat on the all-important Public Services Commission in 2006, in order to campaign against the privatization and deregulation of utilities. He won. The county commissioners chose Kaufmann to replace him, making her the first and only out lesbian in the State Senate.

With mentoring from Kaufmann and Toole and voter data from Keaveny and Kendrick, Mary Caferro won her primary race against an establishment incumbent. "I'm a low-income, single working parent with four kids [under 18] and a job. I know how to multitask," she says with a laugh. About a quarter the size of Schweitzer, she matches his energy spark for spark. One of the reasons she ran for office, she said, was to give people like her a reason to believe in government. In a state that's been besieged by extreme right-wing messages that blame gays and lesbians, immigrants and environmental regulations for the downturn of the blue-collar economy, keeping people engaged is a serious matter. "I was afraid that if we had another Republican majority, the last programs for low-income Montanans would be cut, and that would give poor people all the more reason to be discouraged and get alienated. I wanted people to see me and say, If Mary Caferro can run and win, I have a reason to continue to be part of the process."

In his book *What's the Matter With Kansas?* Thomas Frank describes how Republican power grew from the ground up. The lesson from Montana is that progressive power grows the same way. Schweitzer and Tester are both great charismatic candidates, with drive, strong positions and close relations with the organizations at their base. But in Helena, just about everyone's in on the secret that outsiders tend to miss, namely that without progressive movements, there would have been no "Montana Miracle" in 2004—nor, most likely, a one-seat Democratic majority in the US Senate in 2006.

The Montana party now faces a challenge. A rabble of well-organized "outsiders" have learned the tricks of the party-insiders' trade, and they're rising in confidence, power and experience. Telemark skier Betsy Hands is now an Assemblywoman. After the 2005 session, in which Caferro was part of a successful effort to increase the minimum wage and expand the state's child healthcare program to cover 5,000 more low-income children, she was handily re-elected in 2006. The voters this cohort brought into the process are wondering what happens next. The thrill of being a "ground troop" gets old fast. "Everyone knows people will not participate in a system in which they do not see an opportunity to lead," Caferro told *RadioNation* in March 2006. Now the question for the party is, Will those who—really—made the miracle happen be permitted to enter the power structure and change it? Or will they be asked to sit quietly in the stands and watch the race? And for how long will grassroots blues with grit be willing to do that? ■

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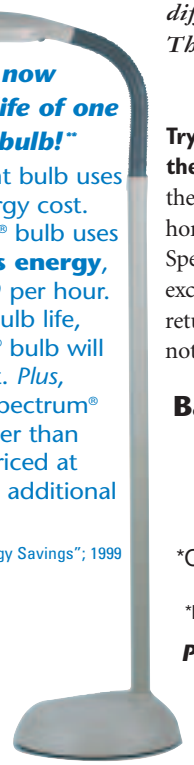

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FOR THE FIRST TIME, IT'S SUBURBS, NOT CITIES, THAT MORE POOR PEOPLE CALL HOME.

KAREN CALDICOTT

The New Suburban Poverty

EYAL PRESS

Rockingham County, North Carolina, has never been known for its opulence, but until recently most residents would not have hesitated to describe it as comfortably middle class. For several decades the county, a rectangular block of land in the north central part of the state, owed its prosperity to textile mills and tobacco plants, industries that weren't always friendly to unions but that nevertheless furnished the local workforce with jobs that paid enough to raise a family and buy a nice house somewhere.

Among those to do so was Johnny Price, a 44-year-old African-American who lives in a ranch house with green shutters on a street called Sparrow in a leafy residential subdivision on the outskirts of the town of Eden. Two towering oak trees dominate Price's front lawn. In his driveway sits a navy blue station wagon. By the standards of some newly built suburbs, the setup is modest, but for Price, the youngest of ten children whose father died when he was 6 and whose mother worked as a domestic servant, it's a testament to the rewards of hard work and perseverance, values he's tried to instill in his teenage son and daughter, who have lived with him since he and his wife divorced. Lately this has gotten more challenging. A year ago Price lost the job he'd held for nineteen years in company-wide layoffs at Unified, a textile manufacturer. He's now struggling to make do on $1,168 in monthly unemployment benefits and, like many people in Rockingham County, which has been ravaged by plant closings in recent years, wondering how long he'll be able to continue paying his mortgage.

Stories of downward mobility in America's suburbs have not exactly cluttered the headlines over the past decade. Gated communities of dream homes, mansions ringed by man-made lakes and glass-cube office parks: These are the images typically evoked by the posh, supersized subdivisions built during the 1990s technology boom. Low-wage jobs, houses under foreclosure, families unable to afford food and medical care are not. But venture beyond the city limits of any major metropolitan area today, and you will encounter these things, in forms less concentrated—and therefore less visible—than in the more blighted pockets of our cities perhaps, but with growing frequency all the same. In the three counties surrounding Greensboro, North Carolina, the city half an hour south of where Johnny Price lives, the poverty rate has surged in recent years. It now stands at 14.4 percent, only slightly below the level in New Orleans.

Greensboro, it turns out, is not alone. Last December the Brookings Institution published a report showing that from Las Vegas to Boise to Houston, suburban poverty has been growing over the past seven years, in some places slowly, in others by as much as 33 percent. "The enduring social and fiscal challenges for cities that stem from high poverty are increasingly shared by their suburbs," the report concludes. It's a problem some may assume is confined to the ragged fringes of so-called "inner ring" suburbs that directly border cities, places where the housing stock is older and from which many wealthier residents long ago departed. But this isn't the case. "Overall…first suburbs did not bear the brunt of increasing suburban poverty in the early 2000s," notes the Brookings report, which found that economic distress has spread to "second-tier suburbs and 'exurbs'" as well.

The result is a historic milestone that has gone strangely ignored: For the first time ever, more poor Americans live in the suburbs than in all our cities combined.

One reason this shift may not have sunk into public consciousness is that for as long as suburbs have existed, Americans have tended to envision them as pristine sanctuaries where people go to escape brushing shoulders with the poor. The most familiar historical example—much lamented by a generation of progressives who came to associate the migration to suburbs with racial backlash and urban decline—is the mass exodus of middle-class white ethnics from the nation's central cities, which accelerated in the wake of the riots and social unrest of the 1960s. In more recent years, it's often assumed, the forces

Eyal Press, a Nation *contributing writer, is the author of* Absolute Convictions*, just out in paperback from Picador.* *Research assistance for this article was provided by Emily Douglas.*

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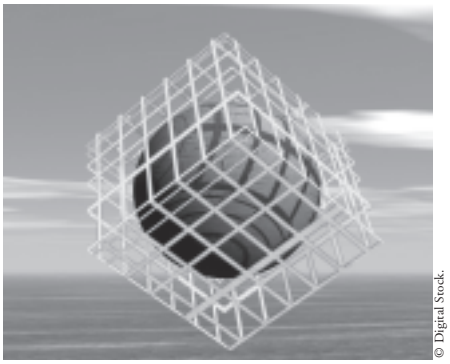

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The University of Texas at Austin. Professor Starbird has won several teaching awards, most recently the 2007 Mathematical Association of America Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo National Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics, which is limited to three recipients annually from the 27,000 members of the MAA.

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fueling the growth of suburbs have only made things worse—the social landscape more segregated, the sprawl more extreme, the gap increasingly vast between people who rarely set foot in cities and those who rarely leave them.

In fact, however, the gentrification of many urban neighborhoods, from Brooklyn to San Francisco to Washington, has forced many working-class residents out. In a reversal of the classic migration story, many of these displaced residents have fled to the suburbs, lured in part by the growing pool of mostly low-wage jobs there—cleaning homes, mowing lawns, staffing restaurants, strip malls and office plazas. Alan Berube, co-author of the Brookings Institution study, says the "decentralization of low-wage employment" is one of the main factors driving suburban poverty rates up.

In some counties, a lot of those jobs are falling to immigrants, who are increasingly heading straight to the suburbs rather than to cities in search of employment. In his 2004 book *On Paradise Drive*, David Brooks presents a sunny portrait of the gorgeous mosaic that the influx of foreigners into formerly lily-white subdivisions has wrought. "Now you'll see little Taiwanese girls in the figure-skating clinics, Ukrainian boys learning to pitch," he writes.

The exploitation calls to mind features of urban sweatshops, but like so much else in suburbia it is more hidden and dispersed.

What you'll also see are people like the day laborers who gather every morning in the parking lots of the Home Depots in Nassau County, Long Island, where the median family income is $87,558 and the overall poverty rate is fairly low, but where the demand for food stamps has increased by 40 percent since 2003. Although the median hourly wage for the roofing and construction jobs that day laborers land is $10 an hour, many don't see a penny of this: A study last year by researchers at UCLA found that nearly half experience wage theft. A worker from Mexico I spoke with on a frigid day in February said he was owed $400 for some plumbing he'd done recently. Like most of the other men around him, he wore a hooded sweatshirt rather than a coat and cupped his fingers around his mouth to warm his bare hands, proper winter apparel evidently being an unaffordable luxury. Because the work is seasonal and sporadic, few day laborers earn more than $15,000 a year. More than half of those injured on the job don't receive the medical care they need.

Other immigrants on Long Island ply trades whose wages and hours call to mind certain features of urban sweatshops, save that the exploitation, like so much else in suburbia, is more hidden and dispersed. "We did a survey of domestic workers here and found that people were working seventy-hour weeks and getting, on average, $4.03 an hour," said Nadia Marin-Molina, director of an immigrants' rights organization called the Workplace Project, in Nassau County. Not long ago, three workers dropped by her office from a nearby restaurant to report they'd been getting $20 for twelve-hour shifts, well below the minimum wage even after factoring in tips. At a deli in the town center of Garden City, an affluent enclave of sprawling homes and fancy shops just down the road from the Workplace Project's modest headquarters, several others were fired simply for demanding to be paid on the books. Last year, the Workplace Project helped immigrants in Nassau County recuperate $143,849 in back wages, some from contractors who paid them with checks that bounced, others from companies like Popeyes and D'Angelo Pizzeria that didn't compensate them for overtime.

That landing a service job hardly guarantees earning an adequate income would not come as news to former factory workers in North Carolina. Johnny Price is currently enrolled in courses at Rockingham Community College, funded under the Trade Adjustment Act, in the hope of becoming an accountant. He told me there's no way he could keep up with his $700 mortgage payments and support his kids working as a clerk in a place like Wal-Mart, a major employer with two new stores in the area.

Price used to make $15 an hour, with health benefits and vacation days. What he's hoping to avoid is the fate of people like Jodi Wilmouth, whom I met at the Rockingham County Red Cross, which opened a food pantry several years ago in a low-slung brick building in Eden. Wilmouth earns $6.25 an hour as a cashier at a local department store called Belk, which she said is not enough to cover her basic expenses. On the day she dropped by, President Bush was visiting a Caterpillar plant in Peoria, Illinois. He later said that in today's economy "workers are making more money."

Ada Wells, who works at the food pantry, offered a different view. "What we have are the working poor," said Wells, another former textile employee. "When I left my factory in 1999, the lowest-paid workers made $9 an hour, with insurance and vacation days. Now we have people who can't pay their electricity bills on the wages they earn."

There are certain comparative advantages to being poor in a place other than inner-city Cleveland or Detroit. Whatever else he may fear, Price doesn't have to worry about his children growing up on a street strewn with crack vials and gang graffiti—the one he lives on has manicured lawns and driveways with basketball hoops. The peculiar toxicity of urban poverty, many scholars believe, rests in its intense concentration, the welter of enmeshed problems that fuel crime, spiraling dropout rates and an air of hopelessness that leeches into every aspect of neighborhood life.

But the suburbs also have their disadvantages, among them the fact that getting anywhere generally requires a car. There's no public transportation system in most outlying suburban areas, which is why the people who show up at the food pantry at the Red Cross in Rockingham County often carpool to get there, cramming one person each from four or five families into a single vehicle to save gas. Then, too, the newness of suburban poverty means in many towns there's a dearth of social service agencies to offer help. Nearly 7,000 people showed up at the food pantry last year, a sevenfold increase from 2000. "It's overwhelming," said Janna Nowell, the facility's director. The day before I visited, the pantry ran out of food, a problem that's become familiar in many suburban locales. "There's a growing spatial gap between the providers and the people in need," says Alan Berube. "Public hospitals, nutrition assistance programs—most of these things are still overwhelmingly urban.

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Dr. Steffanie Seaver PSY.D is an expert in the area of interpersonal relationships. Researcher, author and accomplished public speaker, she has lectured nationwide for over a decade. Dr. Seaver has also been involved with several publications covering relationship and lifestyle issues.

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You see small-scale operations in suburbs getting inundated. They just can't deal with the demand."

An even more vexing challenge is finding an affordable place to live, since most of the low-income, subsidized housing in America was built in cities. Where do indigent people in the suburbs go? In North Carolina, among the few options are places like the slate-gray trailer that 62-year-old Barbara Hall now calls home. She used to live in a four-bedroom ranch house with her husband and kids. That was before she got divorced and lost her job. "It's humiliating," says Hall, who has long silver hair, clear blue eyes and a chronic bad back that requires her to take medication she can't currently afford.

There are, of course, more fortunate people in the suburbs whose houses have doubled and tripled in size in recent years—tech workers in the booming area surrounding North Carolina's research triangle, for example. But since 1998, housing foreclosures in North Carolina have nearly tripled.

The trend extends beyond the South—there were 1.2 million foreclosures across the country in 2006, a 42 percent increase from the previous year—and is among the indications that the number of people under economic duress in many suburbs far exceeds the percentage that is officially poor.

Unravel the thread linking suburbs to prosperity and something else comes undone: the story Republicans have told.

Compared with Barbara Hall, who is unemployed and surviving on disability checks, Rosa Melara, who lives in Montgomery County, Maryland, a suburban area adjacent to Washington, is doing well. Melara works in a nail salon and earned $28,000 last year. She also lives in a county with more low-income housing than most suburbs, thanks to inclusionary zoning policies that for decades have required affordable units to be built in large-scale developments. Yet Melara rents a converted garage without heating because most of the apartments and houses in Montgomery County are still well beyond her means. About half the parishioners in the church she attends in suburban Bethesda are facing similar problems, she told me.

I met Melara at another church in neighboring Howard County, also in the Washington-Baltimore corridor and for several years among the wealthiest counties in the United States. Last year a task force on affordable housing appointed by County Executive James Robey warned that "an undeniable gap" exists between the need for low-income housing and its availability in the area, and not only for the poor. Seventy percent of the jobs in the county, including those of entry-level teachers in its celebrated public school system, cops who patrol the streets and firemen who respond to emergencies, pay less than $50,000 a year. Meanwhile, the average single-family house sold for nearly ten times that amount, $485,500, and rents have crept ever higher. The result is that a growing share of the population—public servants, couples starting families, retirees, recent college graduates—can't find affordable places to live, according to the task force: "These are the children and parents of County residents," its report stated, "County teachers and police officers, the waiters and waitresses who serve meals, the Mall workers, the hospital workers, the people who contribute to the quality of life in Howard County in countless ways."

The dilemma is far worse, of course, for the truly indigent, not least because a lot of suburbanites who might be willing to hire them as nannies or to be served by them at restaurants don't necessarily want them as neighbors. In June 2005 authorities in the town of Brookhaven, in Suffolk County, Long Island, launched a series of raids to shut down overcrowded homes in which immigrants lacking other affordable options were renting rooms. County Executive Steve Levy, a Democrat, declared that the evictions were necessary to "preserve suburbia as we know it." At 196 Berkshire Drive, a powder-blue clapboard house that was raided, immigrants protested by setting up tents in the backyard and sleeping outside. Others who were evicted wound up sleeping in the woods on plastic sheets, their belongings stowed under bushes. In a special report on housing on Long Island, *Newsday* likened the packed, often filthy quarters where many immigrants live—a dozen boarders crammed into a basement flooded with sewage, adults sleeping in the closets of houses on tree-lined streets in nice neighborhoods—to "turn-of-the-century tenements."

Other counties have introduced anti-soliciting laws to drive away day laborers like the ones I met outside the Home Depot in neighboring Nassau County, another sign that being poor in the suburbs comes with the added burden of being made to feel you don't belong. Several of the workers I met told me they've been called "parasites." Some day laborers have had rocks thrown at them. At one point, the Mexican man I spoke with motioned toward a red car that circled by, driven, he said, by a security guard from Staples who patrols the area to make sure he and his fellow laborers stay on the edge of the parking lot, so customers won't be disturbed. In September 2000 two immigrants were picked up by what they thought were contractors, taken to an abandoned warehouse and nearly killed. (They survived by dashing onto the Long Island Expressway.)

Such incidents may be viewed as a product of racism or of something else: a sense of anxiety about the future that extends far beyond the ranks of the poor. "I do think middle-class people here feel squeezed, and if leaders don't offer solutions, they'll look for people to blame," says Workplace Project's Marin-Molina. As in Howard County, evidence of this insecurity is not hard to come by. In 2004 more than 40 percent of Long Island homeowners spent more than one-third of their income (the conventional definition of a "cost burden") on housing, a report published last year by Adelphi University found. In recent years the typical starting job in the region has paid $24,000, far short of the $60,780 the Economic Policy Institute has estimated a family of four would need to cover basic living expenses.

Unravel the thread linking suburbs to prosperity and something else begins to come undone: the story Republicans have told about how people living there, particularly those in the fastest-growing, furthest-outlying communities, are their natural constituents. "Democrats stink in the exurbs" is how conservative columnist Brooks put it some years ago, pointing to the strip-mall zones around Orlando, strong Jeb Bush territory, and to Mesa, Arizona, a booming area east of Phoenix. In

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these rapidly expanding communities, places where the parking lots of megachurches fill up every Sunday with SUVs, liberals just don't have a clue what matters to people, Brooks implied. In the 2004 election, it appeared he was right: Republicans swept such areas, carrying a startling ninety-seven of the 100 fastest-growing counties in the country. In Democratic circles, panic ensued.

It turned out the panic was premature. In last year's midterm elections the GOP's advantage in the exurbs narrowed considerably. Democrats won 60 percent of the vote in inner suburbs, 55 percent in the next ring and a majority of the overall suburban vote. They would not control either the House or Senate today were it not for these gains.

In part, the shift reflects widespread disillusionment with the war in Iraq. But it may also be a sign that Republicans have become the clueless ones when it comes to decoding the concerns of suburbanites. The GOP's presumed edge with these voters rested on the assumption that new suburban growth centers were filling up with prosperous middle-class professionals who care most about low taxes and being left alone to raise their kids. A lot of suburbs now appear to be filling up with a different social type: stressed-out parents worried about healthcare, college tuition and paying their mortgage. Political scientist Jacob Hacker has referred to such people as "office-park populists," folks who "aren't necessarily buying smash-the-system rants against free trade and immigration…[but] are skeptical of corporate promises and concerned about their security."

Addressing the concerns of such people is, of course, not necessarily synonymous with tackling the predicament of the suburban poor. (As the raids on immigrants in Nassau County show, suburban populism can cut two ways.) Nor is the party affiliation of low-income suburbanites necessarily so easy to predict. In North Carolina I met numerous people who fumed about the scandalously low minimum wage or about NAFTA—and then told me they were Republicans. Others complained about the exorbitant cost of healthcare—and about how the government is giving it away free to undocumented Mexicans. But still others nodded when asked about John Edwards's assertion that there are two Americas today. "We do have two Americas," said Ada Wells of Rockingham County, "and they don't understand each other." Many suburbanites I spoke with seemed interested in issues—affordable housing, a higher minimum wage, universal health insurance—that progressive Democrats have long argued should be at the center of the party's agenda, and that both Hacker's "office-park populists" and the people who clean those offices for a living have a stake in. Granted, the affluent software engineers flocking to emerging suburbs might still care more about lower taxes. But more than half the people in emerging suburbs don't have a four-year college degree. The African-American population in such places surged by 50 percent in the 1990s. "If you look at emerging suburbs, they're becoming rapidly more diverse," says the Democratic pollster Ruy Teixeira. "And they're full of people who don't make a lot of money."

Beyond altering voting patterns, the dispersal of poverty to the suburbs has the potential to upend a larger idea: that the interests of suburbanites and city dwellers are diametrically opposed. This has been the guiding—if often unspoken—premise driving

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regional development for decades, one that has played no small part in fueling residential segregation and sprawl. But if cities and suburbs increasingly face many of the same problems, wouldn't it make sense for them to work together?

One proponent of this view is David Rusk, former mayor of Albuquerque and a longtime advocate of more equitable regional development. "In order to deal with the problems of poverty and economic decline reaching across cities into many suburbs, you have to get states to lay down some strong directives with regard to balanced regional housing development and some form of regional tax-base sharing," he says. To illustrate why, Rusk cites the case of southern New Jersey, in particular the area surrounding Camden. "This is an area of roughly 1.75 million people, and the ten fastest-growing municipalities, in terms of job creation, are all third-ring suburbs," he says. "They saw the creation of about 42,000 jobs in the 1990s, but the construction of only 1,200 low-income housing units. Meanwhile, the ten areas that were the biggest employment losers saw 25,000 jobs disappear, but 16,000 price-controlled housing units built. It's a mirror opposite of what's needed—where the job supply is growing, there's no affordable workforce housing. Where it's vanishing, it's all piled in."

Rusk has coined a motto that a growing number of advocacy groups and regional leaders are coming to embrace: "If you're good enough to work here, you're good enough to live here." It is with this principle in mind that New Jersey reformers are rallying behind the idea of repealing an unsavory practice known as a Regional Contribution Agreement, or RCA, an innocuous-sounding term for the Machiavellian deals that enable one municipality—typically an affluent, high-growth suburb—to circumvent its obligation to build low-income housing within its boundaries by paying another municipality—typically a poor city desperate for money—to construct the units instead. The not-so-subtle purpose is to enable suburbs to prevent the "wrong" kind of people from moving in. New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine has said he thinks RCAs are detrimental, but he has yet to endorse legislation introduced in the State Senate that would abolish them.

Even if Corzine comes around, it's perhaps naïve to imagine that such practices will altogether cease: The suburbs were created, after all, precisely to erect spatial barriers between rich and poor. This is surely part of the reason new ones keep springing up in ever more remote areas, away from the crime and squalor (read: poor brown and black folk) in urban locales. But it is also a fact that less affluent people are slowly but surely finding their way into suburbs anyway. Jonathan Lange, an organizer with the Industrial Areas Foundation, works in two of the wealthiest areas in the country: Maryland's Howard and Montgomery counties. The poverty in both places is "discreet, hard to get your hands on and extremely difficult to organize," he says. Nevertheless, it's there. Not long ago, a pastor Lange knows discovered that there are scores of homeless kids at Oakland Mills, a Howard County high school. Some of the kids sleep in cars, others in cheap motels, the pastor was told, an experience unimaginable to many of their classmates, perhaps, but increasingly emblematic of the suburban population these days. ■

LETTERS

CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

no worker, legal or illegal, is afraid to fight for better working conditions. However, unless we stop mass immigration, all efforts to strengthen workers' rights will be futile. There are so many poor people south of the border that continued mass immigration will create a large labor surplus that will drive down wages, especially for blacks and Hispanics who are already here. We must limit immigration. But we should also get serious about helping Mexico's economy. We can begin by undoing the damage that NAFTA's "free trade" policies have done to Mexico. ROBERT BAILLIE

Phoenix

■ I am as liberal as anyone. However, I do not believe the criminals that control Mexico should be left free to rape their people of their rights and benefits, use the United States as a welfare office and chase their uneducated population over the border to send home $300 billion a year. Mexico should be assuring its people of a living wage. American workers should be joining the Mexican workers in bringing a living wage to both countries. Help organize concerned Americans and Mexicans to push for meaningful changes in Mexico at the same time we try to solve our own problems! JAMES MCCLERNAN

MY NIRVANA MOMENT

Brooklyn, NY

■ It's 1:30 Wednesday, the last day of January, and I've just gotten off the Staten Island ferry to take the Brooklyn-bound R train. The subway's closed, streets are blocked off, police cars everywhere. Oh God no! It can't… Then I remember Bush is in town. All right, I'll walk up a few blocks to the A. Beautiful day, happy to be alive in New York City. I love my job. Perfect time for a giant Snickers bar. I hand a buck and a quarter to the newsstand guy. The thing's still frozen. Usually I have no patience and break the frozen candy with my teeth. However, tens of thousands of dollars in recent dental bills for caps, crowns, bridges and God knows what else remind me vaguely of the Buddhist concept of slowly savoring each morsel. This is what I'm doing as thirty or forty police motorcycles roar by. There he is, passing before my eyes on Broad Street. Even through the tinted glass I can see the smarmy "What me worry?" smirk. Instinctively I stick out the middle finger of both hands and stand there quietly moving my arms up and down.

Now, some of us spend entire lifetimes searching for, and perhaps never finding, that perfect moment. Well, all I can tell you is the taste of that slowly dissolving chocolate—the caramel, the nuts, the nougat—the sun shining down through the canyons, the half-completed *Times* crossword under my arm, and the absolute freedom for a 60-year-old guy to express, in the most immature of ways, my total contempt and disdain for the leader of the free world… God I love this country.

BILL BARTLETT, *director*
Imagine Project

EDITORS' NOTE

■ Alexander Cockburn's column last week incorrectly described Representative Peter DeFazio's votes on Iraq spending bills. DeFazio, who opposed authorizing the war, voted against the first two spending bills but voted for the following five, on the grounds that since the troops weren't coming home they needed protective equipment. Thus it was also incorrect to describe DeFazio's vote for the current spending bill as a change of position, one possibly inspired by a promise of funds for schools and libraries.

DUDE! WHERE'S THE PHOTO CREDIT?

■ The photo used in last week's cover design should have been credited to Thomas Good/Next Left Notes. We regret the omission.

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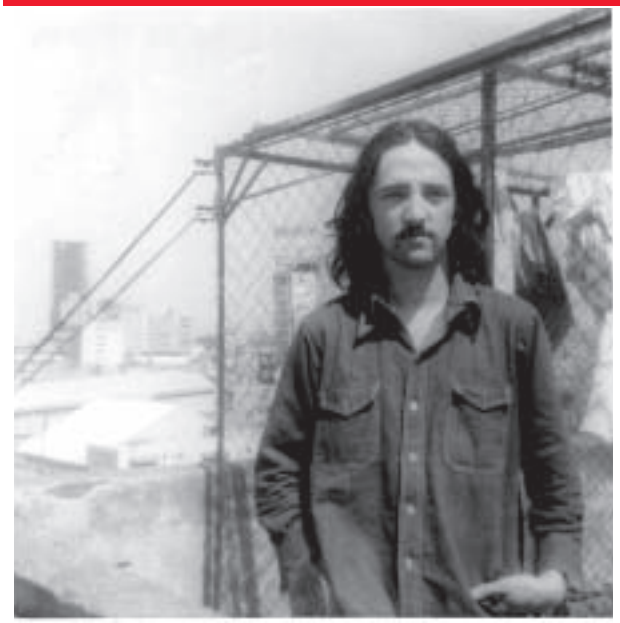
BOOKS & THE ARTS



Bolaño in Mexico

CARMEN BOULLOSA

THE SAVAGE DETECTIVES.
By Roberto Bolaño.
Translated by Natasha Wimmer.
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 577 pp. $27.

AMULET.
By Roberto Bolaño.
Translated by Chris Andrews.
New Directions. 184 pp. $21.95.

When I stepped into the literary scene in Mexico City, clutching my first sheaf of poems and hoping to write many more, it was clear in a flash that the young poets had drawn their battle lines. It was 1974; the city's golden years were drawing to a close.

I had arrived too late. Everything that mattered seemed to have ended in 1968. I had experienced the '68 movement only vicariously, listening to my mother, who used to come home from the university every day with news and fliers. Now all the cafes where students used to gather had been shut down, casualties of the massacre in Tlatelolco. And then, to add private to public tragedy, in 1969 my mother died, my father married a stepmother straight out of Grimm and I was thrown out of the house and left to fend for myself. I sang in a lightweight pop group to earn a few pesos at a bar in the neighboring city of Toluca; I worked as a hostess at a livestock show, hired by the US Embassy; I gave private art lessons for children one summer; I taught in a high school for privileged kids who were almost my age. Everything was painful for me, a source of anxiety and discomfort. It was at that time that my younger sister died in an accident, taking away what little calm and confidence I had left. Through all of this, I was compulsively writing poems; it was the only place where I felt I was going to be able to survive.

Though I was about to turn 20, I already considered myself to be very old. I hadn't yet formed my circle of friends, the women writers and artists who were to be my shelter, my joy, my group. Most writers of my generation had all been publishing since they were much younger; I felt they were all confident and wise, and they all knew which side of the battlefield they were on. I couldn't have cared less.

I enrolled at the public university. The corridors of the faculty of philosophy and literature were haunted by an Uruguayan exile and poet named Alcira, who had gone nuts after spending more than ten days hiding in the bathroom of the

Carmen Boullosa, a Mexican novelist and poet, is Distinguished Lecturer at City College in New York. Her most recent novel available in English is Cleopatra Dismounts *(Grove). El velázquez de París will be published this spring in Spanish (Siruela). This essay was translated by Chris Andrews.*

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faculty building when the campus was occupied by the army in 1968. She would become Auxilio Lacouture, one of Roberto Bolaño's characters in *The Savage Detectives*—in the author's own words, "a detective novel, but also a *roman-fleuve* and a *Bildungsroman*." Lacouture is also the protagonist and narrator of *Amulet*, another Bolaño novel newly translated into English.

Those same university corridors were also frequented by the poets of my generation who had aligned themselves with preexisting enemy camps. One camp admired the demotic poet Efraín Huerta, famous for his "minipoems" packed with humor and nerve. The other looked to an exquisite magazine, *Plural*, published by the cosmopolitan intellectual and future Nobel laureate Octavio Paz, which was edited by an impressive group of writers, including Juan García Ponce, Salvador Elizondo, José de la Colina, Alejandro Rossi and the poet Tomás Segovia.

It was the street-smart types versus the aesthetes: Not that either camp corresponded exactly to its label. Paz and Huerta were descended from the same Mexican literary tradition. Both were born in 1914; they were of Juan Rulfo's generation. As young men, at the end of the 1930s, they had co-edited the magazine *Taller* (Workshop). But over the years they had drifted apart. Literary and political differences had arisen between them. Paz had denounced Communism and broken with the Cuban Revolution. Efraín had not. Paz's people said the Efrainites were Stalinists. The Efrainites called the Octavians reactionaries. Neither tag was entirely accurate. Their hostilities and affinities were both more and less complex than the insults implied.

The young Efrainite poets got around the city on foot, or by bus; they were iconoclastic and attended workshops; in bookstores they scrutinized, read and stole the merchandise; they carried satchels, had long hair and wore huarache sandals with soles made from car tires; they published here and there and spent hours in the downtown cafes, especially Café La Habana, and various seedy bars. The young Octavian poets criticized one another's poems fiercely, in the same cafes as the Efrainites, at neighboring tables; they bought or stole books from the stores, carried satchels, had long hair and almost always wore sandals; they got around the city on foot, or by bus, or in their friends' cars; and they published in the Octavian magazines and literary supplements.

Some of the Efrainites were belligerent and used to turn up at literary events to jeer, pass judgment and generally create havoc. This group (the protagonists of *The Savage Detectives*) called themselves the Infrarealists, and they were under the command of Bolaño, who, in 1976, wrote and was the sole signatory of the Infrarealist Manifesto, a text whose irreverence and verve were worthy of the Surrealists:

> A new lyricism springing up in Latin America, nourishing itself in ways that continue to amaze us.... Tenderness like an exercise in speed. Breath and heat. Experience at full tilt, self-consuming structures, stark raving contradictions.

According to Bolaño, who was originally from Chile but was raised partly in Mexico, Infrarealism was a local version of Dada. Paz was full of praise for the avant-gardes who had been so fond of manifestoes and had himself been closely associated with the Surrealists. But Octavians and Efrainites saw themselves as irreconcilable enemies. In fact, they were branches of the same tree. The manifesto might have been written by Vicente Huidobro (1893–1948), whom both Paz and Huerta had admired since their youth: a Chilean, like Bolaño, and probably the world's most prolific concocter of avant-garde literary -isms.

The Efrainites (including the Infrarealists) and Octavians were fighting a grudge war. Neither camp was free of dissidents. Bolaño, a friend and admirer of Huerta, said repeatedly in interviews that they had "big differences of political opinion," which should come as no surprise, since Bolaño had been a Trotskyist.

As far as I know, only two people were on friendly terms with both the Octavians and the Efrainites (and with Bolaño in particular): among the poets, Verónica Volkow, Trotsky's great-granddaughter; and among the publishers, Juan Pascoe, who ran a small press called Taller Martín Pescador (Kingfisher Workshop—the name was Bolaño's idea). Pascoe's workshop published Bolaño's first book (*Reinventar el amor*, 1976) and mine (*La memoria vacía*, 1978): exquisite limited editions, chapbooks printed on dampened paper using movable type and a hand press, which also turned out the first volumes by Volkow, José Luis Rivas, Francisco Segovia and other poets of our generation.

In his Infrarealist Manifesto, Bolaño wrote:

> The bourgeois and the petit-bourgeois live from party to party. They have one every weekend. The proletariat doesn't have parties. Only regular funerals. That's going to change. The exploited are going to have a big party. Memory and guillotines.

Bolaño was right, literally, about the party habit (but not, thankfully, in his Jacobin prediction). The literary world was small and close-knit, and we lived from party to party, if you count all the readings, lectures, openings and gatherings in cafes. We saw each other all the time. I'm going to recall five such parties, between 1973 and 1976:

The first was the launch of a book by Efraín Huerta, published by Juan Pascoe. Pascoe's big house in the Mixcoac neighborhood was full of people. The Efrainites sang, or rather bawled, rancheras and boleros. The Infrarealists stood firm beside "the barrel of pulque we had brought, and a twenty-five-kilo Mennonite cheese we had lugged from the market at La Merced." I cite our publisher and host, not having been present at that celebration myself.

The second was the launch of a book by Octavio Paz, also published by Pascoe, with a host of Octavians in attendance. Pascoe's house buzzed with conversation. Instead of pulque, there were toritos to drink: ninety-six-proof alcohol with rice milk or (for the suicidal) peanut milk. With my own eyes I saw a group of Infrarealists (mission: sabotage) throw the contents of a glass over Paz (very smartly dressed, in an elegant blazer), who shook out his tie and continued the conversation with a smile, as if nothing had happened.

The third party I can remember took place at the opening of an exhibition by Basia Batorska, wife of the poet and essayist Gabriel Zaíd (Zarco in *The Savage Detectives*), a Paz fellow traveler, considered then and now one of our most critical thinkers, who in the '70s gathered verses from the hundreds of new young poets sprouting in Mexico. I am certain that no Infrarealists were present, because there were no incidents. Like the other young poets, I put on shoes for the occasion; but we didn't have our hair cut or relinquish our satchels. That was where I met Octavio Paz and chatted with him. I had just published my first poem in a "professional" literary supplement, and he commented on it in very favorable terms. Naturally, I was walking on air. He invited me to visit him at home. The apartment (which I chose not to grace with my huarache sandals) was wonderful, elegant, full of Mexican and Indian artworks, extraordinary paintings and his personal library. An exquisite, light-filled home; the home of a poet who had been an ambassador. Paz had an utterly charming manner and was

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an incomparable conversationalist.

Since I never went to Efraín Huerta's place (which had surely seen many tire-shod visitors), I will rely on Juan Pascoe's description of a corner of that residence: "There were press cuttings stuck on the walls, culled from different articles, taken out of context, with the following title: 'Octavio Paz killed his mom'; there was a photo of the Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier, one of the Sandinista poet Ernesto Cardenal, a small Cuban flag, aesthetic variations on the hammer and sickle."

I didn't attend the fourth party either, so again I quote our publisher describing the formal inauguration of the Infrarealist group, with Bolaño at the helm. Addressing an audience of forty people, Roberto set out the reasons for his hatred of Paz: "his odious crimes in the service of international fascism, the appalling little piles of words that he risibly calls his 'poems,' his abject insults to Latin American intelligence, that dreary excuse for a 'literary magazine,' which reeks of vomit and goes by the name of *Plural*."

At the fifth party on my list, Paz and Huerta read poems together. It was a historic occasion. When Paz began to read, the Efrainite saboteurs, or perhaps just the Infrarealists, started booing. Huerta, who had undergone a laryngectomy, stood up and, with outstretched arms, called his troops to order, demanding silence and respect. They let Paz read unheckled.

I am not certain that Bolaño was present at that reading in San Ildefonso, because I saw his circle from a distance. They frightened me. When I gave my first poetry reading—a condition of the lucrative Salvador Novo fellowship for poets under the age of 21, which Ernesto San Epifanio (Darío Galicia) wins in *Amulet*—there was a big party to celebrate, and I couldn't sleep the night before, worrying that the "Infras" would sabotage it. Just as I had feared, they turned up and jeered as they saw fit. But they spared me, perhaps because of Galicia, who had won the fellowship the year before and was a friend of mine.

I was too busy battling my own demons to engage in public confrontations with Infrarealists. Everything was a struggle for me. Also, I had read Bolaño's book of poetry, printed by Pascoe, and I respected it.

It was a good time to be in Mexico City, which was a beautiful place back then. Depending on your preferences, you could talk to Paz or Huerta, Luis Rius, Juan José Arreola, Luis Cardoza y Aragón, Tito Monterroso, Juan Rulfo or Salvador Elizondo—not to mention García Márquez and Álvaro Mutis, who had been living in our city for some time. The author of *Amulet* was well aware of this. The gallery of Latin American authors was extensive and accessible. In the '70s, a wave of exiles from the south refreshed the scene. I kept my eyes open as best I could, and from time to time in cafes, bookshops and galleries I came face to face with the Legends. I no longer had a home; they would be my new family.

Bolaño quit Mexico in 1977. With what he was paid for two magazine pieces, he bought a ticket to go to Europe and work as a "dishwasher, waiter, night watchman, trash collector, docker, and grape-picker." Why did he leave a marvelous city where he could earn a living from his pen?

Perhaps that was just what he wanted:

> To live [as he put it in an interview] outside literature. In Mexico I lived a very literary life. I was surrounded by writers and moved in a world where everyone was either a writer or an artist. And in Barcelona I began to move in a world without writers. I had some writer friends, but gradually I made other sorts of friends. I did all sorts of jobs, of course.... And I thought it was wonderful.

Or was it to follow the dictates of his Infrarealist Manifesto?

> Risk is always elsewhere. The true poet is always leaving himself behind. Never too long in the same place, like guerrilla fighters, flying saucers, and the white eyes of lifers. LEAVE IT ALL BEHIND, AGAIN. GO OUT ON THE ROADS.

He went and left himself behind, because even then he was a leading figure in our literary world.

He went before I could get to know him. Later, when I had learned to stand on my own two feet, and was free of the terrible burden of being very young, I lived with an eminent Efrainite: Alejandro Aura, the father of my two children. Paz found it hard to forgive me. Mario Santiago (Ulises Lima, the Infrarealist poet who appears in several of Bolaño's works) would come to our place, often clutching self-published pamphlets containing his new poems, and drink an alarming amount, like a true Efrainite.

Some years later, when I had published my first two books of poetry and my first two novels, a journalist who was conducting a kind of survey asked me which camp I belonged to: Was I with Huerta or Paz? I said I was with Ramón López Velarde, who died at the end of the Mexican Revolution: one of Bolaño's favorites, a poet revered both by Paz—who wrote about him at length—and by Huerta.

Paz or Huerta, that was the question. We never thought about whether we were for or against "magic realism." There were many stars in our fictional firmament in the early '70s, and most of them—Julio Cortázar, José Donoso, Jorge Ibargüengoitia and García Márquez himself—worked in a variety of genres: realism and journalism as well as imaginative and fantastic literature. And yet there was a division among the fiction writers that paralleled the opposition between Octavian and Efrainite poets. There were those who admired La Onda (The Vibe), a realist literary movement that was Mexico's version of the Beats, a group of young urban novelists whose prose was the equivalent of Efrainite poetry. On the other side were those who saw themselves as the heirs of Juan José Arreola, Juan Rulfo and Adolfo Bioy Casares; what they espoused wasn't magic realism but an imaginative frame of mind, open to ghosts, madness and dreams (as in the fictions of Borges, Bioy Casares's novel *The Invention of Morel*, or the jewel-like short stories of Silvina Ocampo). The members of this second group were, in a sense, the narrative counterparts of the Octavians. Neither of these "schools" required their followers to adopt a linear narrative technique. The better you know the tradition, the better you can subvert it; we knew that.

And that was exactly what Bolaño did, straddling the divisions between fictional and poetic camps. His first long novel, *The Savage Detectives*, is closer to The Vibe, more Efrainite, though not entirely. In his much shorter novel *Amulet* and in the prodigious *2666* (which has yet to be published in English), dreams illuminate reality and reality illuminates collective dreams; there is surrealism, fantasy and madness, but also a cold eye cast on reality.

Years later, like the rest of us, Bolaño had to respond to the question: Are you for or against "magic realism"? It bounced back to us from younger generations who hadn't known the privileged, navel-gazing literary world we had enjoyed in the early '70s. With the political and economic tragedies of the region, the literary circles broke and scattered, the publishing houses collapsed and Mexico City stopped being Latin America's sounding board. The youngest took their cues from the gringos—they judged the panorama of Latin American writing by which books had become hits in English translation.

Efraín Huerta died in 1982. Octavio Paz in 1998. Mexico City now is like a picture taken in the '70s, photoshopped

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by a madman. The city had been slashed by transit routes (thanks to Mayor Carlos Hank González, less interested in a grand Moses-like vision than in rapacious corruption—wide one-way avenues cutting through the old neighborhoods, creating ad hoc channels for daily traffic jams). In the year of my birth, 1954, the official number of inhabitants was 3 million. Now the unofficial figure puts it at more than 23 million. When I read *The Savage Detectives* and *Amulet* shortly after their publication, it was like going back to the home we had in the '70s, the charmed—for me infernal—house of our youth. Trying to write their way back to childhood, some novelists turn it into an irretrievably lost (and forever poisoned) paradise. Roberto Bolaño made our youth his own, and reconstructed it in his novels. Reading them, I felt at home, not just because of the city and the recognizable settings but also because of an affinity and shared tastes. It was clear to me that, like other writers of our generation (Daniel Sada, Francisco Hinojosa, Juan Villoro), we had served our apprenticeship in the world of the '70s, in the shadow of the 1968 massacre, with the military coups and the guerrilla movements; we were the dispossessed. It's not easy for novelists of the same generation to admire one another; but it's a blessing when it happens. I admired Roberto. And I was doubly lucky: He returned my admiration.

We were formally introduced, twenty years after he left Mexico, in Vienna (which, like Mexico City in reverse, has shrunk to two-thirds of its former population). We had been invited to speak on a theme that was relevant to Roberto's work, not mine: exile. I said what I felt like saying, and so did he, disregarding the theme. There was a fraternal complicity between us from the start; I took him along to the dinner organized for me at the Embassy, and in exchange he took me to the outskirts of the city to see what must be the least appealing stretch of the Danube, in which some charmless ducks were swimming with a curious clumsiness. Roberto showed me a Vienna that was uncannily similar to Mexico City. He refused to go to museums or the kind of picturesque spots I love to visit; he was sure we'd be attacked by neo-Nazis.

That was the beginning of an uninterrupted correspondence. We wrote to each other almost every day. I don't think we ever discussed our relation to "magic realism," although we did say exactly what we thought of many writers. We also crossed paths at other literary events, or almost. I once read in Nîmes, then took a train to Blanes, where we ate by the sea: myself; Roberto; his wife, Carolina; and Lautaro, his son (the "little spark," as he called Alexandra, had not yet arrived). When my novel about Cleopatra was published, he was kind enough to travel to Madrid and launch it. It was such an anomalous novel—neither realist nor fantastic and yet both at once—that Roberto, who read it in manuscript, was immediately charmed.

On July 2, 2003, I wrote scolding him for not having replied to my e-mail of a few days before. On the third, Carolina wrote back: "Dear Carmen, Roberto asked me to reply to your message and tell you that he's gone into hospital… he'll be back at the keyboard soon. Love, Carolina." He died on the fifteenth of that month.

I spent months trying to get used to the idea that Roberto had died. When his collection of stories, *El gaucho insufrible*, came out, I couldn't bring myself to open it. Then came the monumental *2666*, which he had mentioned so often in conversations and e-mails; it was irresistible. It is one of the great novels of my language, a raging monster of a book; the rest of Bolaño's work pales by comparison. After reading *2666*, I went back to the book of

Sunday:
Cocktails with
Richard Dreyfuss

Monday:
Q and A with
Ralph Nader and
Liza Featherstone

Tuesday:
Ogling the Hubbard
Glacier next to
Mark Hertsgaard

Wednesday Night:
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with Victor Navasky

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Katrina vanden Heuvel

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stories: uneven exercises by a master of narrative acrobatics. Some are simply indulgent, written in the manner of Bolaño's character Sensini, to win prizes, or worse still, to recruit disciples. All bear the trace of his hand, it's true, but Roberto Bolaño didn't write with his hand. He wrote with the teeth he had left along the way (as had Auxilio Lacouture), the molars he lost when he had no money to pay a proper dentist or simply didn't care.

Paz, Huerta, Arreola, Cortázar: Bolaño took the best from them all. When he left Mexico he wasn't fleeing the masters: He was running to catch the ball they had flung high into the air. ■

The Semiwarriors

ANDREW J. BACEVICH

In books, essays and op-eds, complaints about presidential power run amok have once again become legion—with the still-unfolding saga of the Gonzales Eight the most recent, if hardly the most egregious, example. These complaints derive from a common source: the perceived excesses of the Bush Administration, perpetrated under the pretext of prosecuting the Global War on Terror. Yet as a close reading of the books considered here makes plain, "unchecked and unbalanced" presidential power is itself not the problem but merely its outward manifestation. The imperial presidency is not the disease; it is a symptom. To imagine that getting rid of Bush will cure what ails the body politic is akin to assuming that excising a tumor will alone suffice to cure cancer.

The real affliction is more insidious. For want of a better label, call it "semiwar," a term coined after World War II by James Forrestal to promote permanent quasi mobilization as the essential response to permanent global crisis. A man who saw demons everywhere, Forrestal was convinced that he alone grasped the danger they posed to the United States.

Forrestal was also a zealot, the prototype for a whole line of national security ideologues stretching across six decades from Dean Acheson to Donald Rumsfeld, from Paul Nitze to Paul Wolfowitz. Geoffrey Perret's acerbic description of Acheson applies to them all: His "mind turned to the apocalyptic as easily, if not as often, as other men's thoughts turn toward money or sex." For semiwarriors, time is always short. The need for action is always urgent. The penalty for hesitation always promises to be dire.

From Forrestal's day to the present, semiwarriors have viewed democratic politics as problematic. Debate means delay. To engage in give-and-take or compromise is to forfeit clarity and suggests a lack of conviction. The effective management of national security requires specialized knowledge, a capacity for clear-eyed analysis and above all an unflinching willingness to make decisions, whatever the cost. With the advent of semiwar, therefore, national security policy became the preserve of experts, few in number, almost always unelected, habitually operating in secret, persuading themselves that to exclude the public from such matters was to serve the public interest. After all, the people had no demonstrable "need to know." In a time of perpetual crisis, the anointed role of the citizen was to be pliant, deferential and afraid.

For Forrestal and other members of the emergent national security elite, fired by the need to confront a never-ending array of looming threats, the presidency served as an accommodating host. Semiwarriors built the imperial presidency. On behalf of the chief executive—increasingly referred to as the Commander in Chief—they claimed new prerogatives. They created new institutions that became centers of extra-constitutional power: the National Security Council, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the various agencies that make up the intelligence "community." When out of office, they inhabited think tanks, consulted, lobbied and generally raked in the dough, all the while positioning themselves for a return to power.

They also imprinted on the capital city a new style, one that emphasized perils without precedent, activism on a global scale and a preference for hard power. In 1933, when Franklin Roosevelt became President, the District of Columbia was merely a seat of government and the United States was still a republic. When FDR's successor left office twenty years later, Washington fancied itself the center of the universe, with the United States now the self-anointed Leader of the Free World. As Cullen Murphy observes in *Are We Rome?*, a mordantly funny essay filled with arresting observations, this transformation of status fostered large delusions: "that the world is small, that society is malleable, and that the capital's stance is paramount." To reside in the imperial city was to believe that "assertions of will can trump assessments of reality: the world is the way we *say* it is."

Through the first decades of the twentieth century, American statecraft at its best had been informed by a judicious realism, perhaps best exemplified by Henry Stimson, Secretary of War throughout World War II. By 1945 that realist tradition had just about played itself out. Just three weeks after V-J Day, Stimson left Washington for the last time. Forrestal, Stimson's naval counterpart, stayed on, stoking his fevered inclinations. Not long thereafter, the War Department itself—within which war as such had typically figured as an afterthought—gave way to a new Department of Defense. Along with the CIA, DoD became the principal instrument for waging semiwar, its actual purpose having little to do with defense per se and everything to do with projecting US military power around the world.

That Harry Truman should have appointed Forrestal the first Secretary of Defense seems only fitting; that the job then broke Forrestal—in 1949 he suffered a nervous collapse and committed suicide—might have been seen as a portent, a cosmic repudiation of Forrestal's grand endeavor. Members of the new national security elite chose to see Forrestal's demise in a different light: He had lacked the requisite toughness. So the Pentagon hung Forrestal's portrait in the hallway, named an aircraft carrier in his honor and promptly forgot him.

What destroyed Forrestal was his inability to control the generals and admirals who ran the US military. To his considerable chagrin, Truman found himself encountering similar frustrations. As a practical matter, it turned out that the Commander in Chief enjoyed only a limited capacity to command.

Already in the late 1940s, the apparatus created within the executive branch to assist the President in conducting semiwar manifested a will of its own. Presidents could set events in motion—without bothering to secure Congressional authorization, Truman committed US forces to Korea in 1950 and later that year made the fateful deci-

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sion to send them north of the 38th Parallel—but having done so, writes Geoffrey Perret, he was "no more the master of his fate than a leaf tumbling down the street in the wind." This point forms a central theme of Perret's *Commander in Chief*: Semiwarriors evince great confidence in their ability to manage events; when they miscalculate, the President is left holding the bag and the American people are left to foot the bill.

Despite his no-nonsense, take-no-guff, buck-stops-here manner, Truman was as much a creature of the imperial presidency as its directing officer. The Most Powerful Man in the World exercised only limited control over the national security apparatus that provided the ostensible foundation of his authority. Others set the tune to which the man in the Oval Office danced. In *Presidential Power*, Matthew Crenson and Benjamin Ginsberg quote Clark Clifford, a key Truman aide, to explain how the process worked: Clifford and other members of the White House staff would arrive at "some understanding among ourselves on what direction we would like to see the president take on any given issue." Having reached their decision, Truman's nominal subordinates would "quietly and unobtrusively…try to steer the president in that direction."

In short, as the atmosphere of semiwar took hold in the later 1940s, the formulation of national security policy became less democratic, but it did not become less political. It's just that politics became an insider's game, shielded from public scrutiny; henceforth, the politicking that counted occurred within the presidency behind closed doors. Keeping the Joint Chiefs on board became more important than gaining the assent of Congress. Maintaining a consensus among the various entities represented on the National Security Council took precedence over attending to what was once called the common good.

The events of 9/11 endowed semiwar with a new lease on life. That the crisis touched off by the events of September 11, 2001, will continue in perpetuity has become an article of faith. Politicians now talk of peace the way cynical preachers speak of the Second Coming: Paying homage to the idea remains an obligation, but only rubes take such stuff seriously. No credible presidential candidate in either party has dared to question the wisdom or necessity of waging the Global War on Terror. Like the poor, apparently, the GWOT—or, as some style it, "The Long War"—promises to be with us always.

In *Unchecked and Unbalanced*, Frederick Schwarz Jr. and Aziz Huq tabulate the chilling byproducts of this sort of groupthink. Among the most egregious: Justice Department memos justifying torture; the blizzard of "signing statements" in which President Bush claims the prerogative of selectively disregarding the law; domestic surveillance implemented on a scale without precedent; the open-ended imprisonment of "detainees"—including American citizens—without charge; and a program of "extraordinary rendition" that secretly delivers suspected terrorists into the hands of foreign intelligence services for interrogation.

Schwarz and Huq are especially good at describing the exertions by the Bush Administration to cloak these actions with a tissue of legality. Richard Nixon once declared, "If the President orders it, that makes it legal." The lawyers in the Bush Justice Department, with John Yoo, formerly of the Office of Legal Counsel, playing a leading role, expanded on the Nixon Doctrine. The resulting Yoo Doctrine goes something like this: If the President wants to order it, creative lawyering can contrive an argument that empowers him to do so.

In *Presidential Power*, Crenson and Ginsberg point out that the problem is not so much Presidents seizing power as having it handed to them. As Americans increasingly embrace a minimalist definition of citizenship, their ability to influence government policy diminishes. With its "weak political parties, its partially demobilized electorate, and its

BOOKS DISCUSSED IN THIS ESSAY

COMMANDER IN CHIEF: How Truman, Johnson, and Bush Turned a Presidential Power Into a Threat to America's Future.
By Geoffrey Perret.
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 496 pp. $27.

ARE WE ROME? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America.
By Cullen Murphy.
Houghton Mifflin. 272 pp. $23.

PRESIDENTIAL POWER: Unchecked and Unbalanced.
By Matthew Crenson and Benjamin Ginsberg. Norton. 432 pp. $27.95.

UNCHECKED AND UNBALANCED: Presidential Power in a Time of Terror.
By Frederick A.O. Schwarz Jr. and Aziz Z. Huq. New Press. 276 pp. $25.95.

THE MATADOR'S CAPE: America's Reckless Response to Terror.
By Stephen Holmes.
Cambridge. 384 pp. $30.

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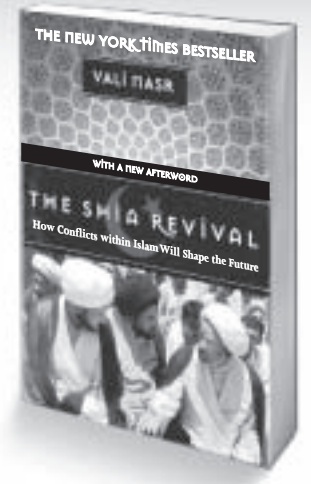
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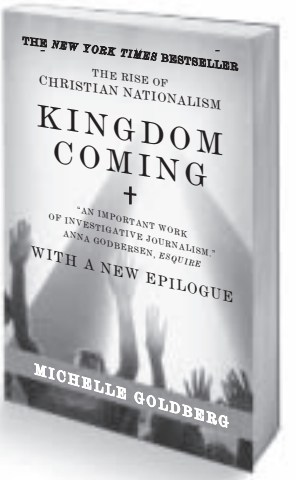
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citizens transformed into mere 'customers' of government," they write, contemporary America "is made to order for presidentialism." In this regard, the transformation of the relationship between the US military and the American people since Vietnam has proved crucial.

Credit the original insight to Nixon during Vietnam's latter stages: reliance on citizen-soldiers can impose constraints when it comes to using force; an Army made up of professionals—a military detached from society—could well enhance presidential freedom of action. Nixon's creation of a so-called all-volunteer force met with the enthusiastic approval of Americans eager to shed any responsibility for contributing to the nation's defense—especially if that responsibility carried with it the prospect of being shipped to some God-forsaken outpost in Southeast Asia.

Without anyone taking much notice, Americans forfeited ownership of their Army. The armed forces became the property of the Commander in Chief, to be used as he sees fit—a proposition that has long since received tacit Congressional endorsement. In practice, when it comes to climbing aboard the bandwagon bound for war, few members of Congress will risk being left behind. As a consequence, write Crenson and Ginsberg, "America's military ventures abroad now rely on a relatively small and insulated force" of regulars "whose deployment and casualties produce barely a ripple on Main Street."

This might be tolerable if presidentialism yielded effective policy. But it doesn't. The overall performance of semiwarriors since the rise of the national security state qualifies at best as mixed. Since 9/11 it has been nothing short of disastrous. Perret's *Commander in Chief* offers an angry but highly readable account of how Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam and George W. Bush in Iraq repeated the blunders committed by Harry Truman in Korea. Perret portrays each of these conflicts as unnecessary and unwinnable. Each case featured a set of advisers keen to demonstrate their masculinity by sending American soldiers off to fight. In each instance a President out of his depth and ill equipped to exercise independent judgment did as his advisers urged, with tragic results.

When it comes to exposing the defects of US policy since September 2001, Stephen Holmes's book *The Matador's Cape*, a collection of previously published essays (some of which originally appeared in these pages), is especially devastating. Even many Republican stalwarts now acknowledge that when it comes to sustained ineptitude, the Bush Administration takes the blue ribbon. Holmes goes further, exposing the profound irrationality and the acute narcissism informing the Administration's response to 9/11.

There is a great irony here. The semiwarriors surrounding Bush had spent the Clinton years carping about the absence of strategic coherence. Their own moment having arrived, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz and company embarked on a reckless course so fraught with contradictions as to make Bill Clinton appear the very model of a prudent statesman. "The fate of the country," writes Holmes, "was abandoned to the personal eccentricities, obsessions, compulsions, and tunnel vision of a handful of political operatives." Chief among those personal eccentricities was a disdain for history. Pre-eminent among the obsessions was a devout faith in the efficacy of military power. Looming large among the compulsions was an itch to have another go at Saddam Hussein—not because he was strong and posed a danger but because he was weak and represented an opportunity. According to Holmes, "the Administration viewed Iraq less as a threat than as a showcase. The purpose of unleashing American firepower in Iraq was not so much to take out a cruel but puny dictator but rather to advertise the folly of defying the United States."

The Big Lie propagated by the architects of the Iraq War is not that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction nor that he was in cahoots with Osama bin Laden; it is that they possessed a secret formula for keeping America safe, the essential ingredient in that formula being a mandate to engage in open-ended war. Although the semiwarriors advising Bush fancied that they had discovered something original,

Lying in the Middle of the Field

Tidewater, Oregon

The tractor has left rows in the grass,
somewhat like rows of cut cane. Louisiana,
I take you everywhere.

The field itself is a giant row
between aisles of fir and alder,
a chute running west to east,

as I will run west to east,
not like the hurrying of the sun—
beginning and end being one and all that.

Some might call this loafing.
It is such a pleasure at this point
not to care what the locals

in their trucks, the loggers,
and the UPS man might think
if they saw me from the road.

A field with no boundaries,
an expanse of tideland
is more honest really,

my back sinking in the mud,
high tide covering my joy.

Martha Serpas

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they were really peddling the same elixir concocted by James Forrestal some six decades ago. Having drunk deeply of that elixir, President Bush is now left holding the bag, with others—chiefly young soldiers and their families—picking up the tab.

Will the errors and excesses of the Bush Administration spell the demise of the imperial presidency? Don't count on it.

Democrats bemoan the failures of the Bush Administration, and with good cause. Yet none of the Democrats vying to replace President Bush is doing so with the promise of reviving the system of checks and balances. In this regard, the views of Republicans and Democrats align precisely. The aim of the party out of power is not to cut the presidency down to size but to seize it, not to reduce the prerogatives of the executive branch but to regain them.

In Washington and in national politics more generally, the Schlesinger Rule remains sacrosanct. Named in honor of the late Arthur Schlesinger Jr., eminent historian and on-again, off-again enthusiast of presidential activism, the rule goes like this: When the other party does it, it's an abuse of power; when my own party does it, it's dynamic leadership.

The press plays the role of enabler. Having had a field day recording President Bush's triumphal procession from one spectacular blunder to the next—with Iraq, Katrina and now Walter Reed vying for top honors—reporters can't be bothered to assess the implications of these gaffes. They are already turning to the next Big Story: handicapping the imperial succession. Is it Hillary's turn? Will Obama's allure last? Can McCain and Giuliani sell themselves to the Christian right? For as long as members of the media can recall, the presidency has been the biggest story in town; they have a vested interested in preserving it.

But in their contempt for politicians and journalists, Americans should not be too quick to let themselves off the hook. Any serious effort to reduce the presidency to its pre-imperial proportions would imply rethinking the premises of US foreign policy, based on self-aggrandizing assumptions about American wisdom, competence and prerogatives and about the capacity of others to manage their own affairs. Given our chronic inability—or is it unwillingness?—to see the world as it is and to see ourselves as we really are, such a reassessment seems exceedingly unlikely. In an age of the citizen as consumer-spectator, Americans care enough to complain, but not nearly enough to act. Long live the emperor. ■

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FILMS

Undercover of the Night

STUART KLAWANS

BLACK BOOK • ZODIAC

Sod had not yet overgrown the mass graves, nor had the gaping holes been fully plugged in Poland's cities, when Andrzej Munk decided to show his countrymen that their resistance to Nazi occupation had been an act of drunken slapstick. Do you want to see a provocation? Try *Eroica*, released in 1957, in which Munk summed up the partisan movement—then fresh in living memory—in the figure of a horny lounge lizard, who served his country by stumbling blindly across enemy lines.

Since Munk had been a partisan himself, and was a Jew, too, he had the right to raise his middle finger if he felt like it. So did Jean-Pierre Melville, and for exactly the same reasons. Though far less sardonic than Munk in his view of the struggle against Nazism, Melville was just as antiheroic in his great *Army of Shadows*. Released in 1969, it represented the French Resistance as a kind of gangland operation carried out by grim men bundled in hats and overcoats.

So much for *Casablanca*. Cinema's romantic image of the Resistance, formulated while the battles were still raging, became for Munk and Melville a myth that needed debunking. This target shifted, though, for a later generation of filmmakers who had no firsthand experience of the fighting. Younger writer-directors, who grew up wondering about the role their parents played in the war, have tended to question not the character of the Resistance but rather the myth of its popularity. For example: In his insidiously amusing *A Self-Made Hero* (1996), Jacques Audiard tells a fable about a dreamy and protected young fellow who, like so many Frenchmen, begins his career as a Resistance fighter on May 8, 1945.

Now, half a century after *Eroica*, we may add Paul Verhoeven's *Black Book* to the revisionist list. It's actually his second entry. Before he became the bad boy of Netherlands film with *Spetters* and *The Fourth Man*, and before he became an international bad boy with *Basic Instinct*, *Showgirls* and *Starship Troopers*, Verhoeven made the World War II epic *Soldier of Orange* (1977), a fiction adapted from the memoirs of a Dutch Resistance leader. Its principal characters are college friends, some of whom resist the Nazis and some of whom collaborate. This is the emphasis you might have expected from a director born in July 1938. *Soldier of Orange* concentrates on the choices made by his elders.

Beyond that, *Soldier of Orange* bears the emotional traces of a childhood marked by war, with all its chaos, absurdity and amorality. You might say these qualities are now fully in play in *Black Book*, the film that returned Verhoeven to the Netherlands after a long absence and brought him back to the subject of World War II. Or, just as plausibly, you might say Verhoeven puts into play a talent lavishly cultivated in Hollywood for ultraviolence and the old in-out.

In *Black Book*, Verhoeven asks you to consider the degrees of compromise that may lie between resistance and collaboration—to wonder where you would draw the line and on what basis you would draw it. At the same time, he flaunts his willingness to deliver vulgar thrills, making you wonder where tough-minded drama leaves off and prurient interest takes over. Of course, as Verhoeven knows perfectly well, the second question becomes trivial in the context of the first. But then, if there's no distinction to be made between art and pornography, there also can be no salvation for *Black Book*'s protagonist.

She is the Jewish Resistance heroine as showgirl. Before the war, Rachel Stein (Carice Van Houten) was a cabaret singer. Now, as the main body of the story begins—I'll leave the frame for later—she is alternately in hiding and on the lam, though still spunky enough to sunbathe on the beach, sing along with her old records (using a carrot to mime her microphone) and kick up her legs flirtatiously when passing the German troops, evidently on the theory that a girl is best concealed in plain sight. With her heart-shaped face, wide-awake eyes, abundant curls and full-lipped overbite, Rachel brings to mind a kewpie doll that's reached the age of consent. And consent she does, even after she's

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been bombed, chased, betrayed to the Nazis, nearly drowned and made witness to the murder of her family, all within twenty minutes of screen time. The horrors to which she has been so quickly subjected serve only as the occasion for the dark-haired fugitive Rachel Stein to be reborn (literally, out of a casket) as a blond member of a Resistance cell, bearing the new name of Ellis de Vries. Among her first significant actions: to lip-lock her smoldering comrade Hans (Thom Hoffman) and then snuggle up to Holland's conspicuously handsome Gestapo chief, Ludwig Müntze (Sebastian Koch).

Back at the hideout, Ellis's comrades decide she ought to lift Müntze's interest or something even higher, so she can infiltrate Gestapo headquarters. "How far would you be prepared to go?" asks the Resistance leader, as the camera dollies in on Ellis's face. Her eyes speak the answer: She is brave, and Müntze really fills out that uniform.

At this point, you might want to stop my account, having guessed that the next part will be a description of breasts and pubic hair. Nobody stopped Verhoeven. In the interest of giving the people what they want, he was prepared, as always, to go as far as an R rating could take him. (So too, I might add, was his lead actress, who is every bit as game as she is polished.) I suppose the standard justifications for this pandering would be that it's realistic, or that it intensifies your experience of the character's duplicity. A performer by profession, Rachel has been forced to play a role to survive. Now, as Ellis, she chooses to live an even more dangerous imposture—one that may get her killed by the Gestapo or taint her fatally in her comrades' eyes.

But I detect no effort in *Black Book* to suggest such rationalizations, let alone to develop them. Verhoeven simply tosses in your face those old-school entertainment values—anybody in the house want some tits and ass? here they are!—and lets them coexist with the film's sturdier elements. As a result, you become aware of watching *Black Book* on two tracks at once, external and internal. You're diverted (or offended) by the shameless showmanship of the picture while being moved (or troubled, or challenged) by the events within the story.

The most determining of these events, carried out within that first twenty minutes, is the looting of corpses. In a nocturnal scene staged for maximum horror, Verhoeven fixes one idea indelibly in your mind: The murder of Europe's Jews was a profit-making enterprise. From this point on, the plot of *Black Book* (written by Verhoeven and Gerard Soeteman) is largely an exercise in following the money. Racist ideology motivates almost nobody in the film, except for the Resistance leader. (He's unwilling to save Jews when he could be rescuing "good Dutchmen.") Religion motivates only fools (a Resistance fighter who won't fight) and monsters (a vindictive mob that summons imprisoned collaborators "to church"). Patriotism gets some lip service, and lust appears as a complicating factor; but greed sets off and sustains the intrigue, even for the characters who don't care about loot. Ellis is one; she's out solely for self-preservation and revenge. Müntze is another; he just wants whatever private peace he can salvage from a war he knows is lost. Still, these two are at the mercy of despoilers who are carrying out one of history's most heartless smash-and-grab campaigns.

Since I'm not a scholar, I'll have to let others debate the justice of this interpretation of the past, and weigh the accuracy of *Black Book*'s portrayal of near-universal corruption and compromise. Assuming, though, that Verhoeven's worldview is at least plausible, I will make three points about *Black Book*.

First: Verhoeven is expert not just in moving along the action and pumping up the thrills but in sustaining a basic sense of materialism. Objects count for him: a vial of insulin, a bar of chocolate, a microphone, the notebook that gives the film its title. These things repeatedly matter to the story, almost as much as the

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NEW YORK

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bank notes and diamonds.

Second: Although it's inappropriate even for a materialist to mix art and porn, the suspension of norms is also a theme of *Black Book*. Through most of the story, Ellis feels it's inappropriate that she can't grieve for her losses. When she does finally break down, it's for the most inappropriate cause.

Third: The cynicism of the main flashback story carries over, with outrageous effect, into the movie's frame. At the beginning and end of *Black Book*, Ellis is a Rachel once more, and is living on a kibbutz in Israel. The year, significantly, is 1956.

This implied continuation of one war into another is *Black Book*'s main contribution to the tradition of revisionist provocation. There will be no peace for Ellis de Vries—and no salvation for Rachel Stein, beyond the sheer animal resilience of being a showgirl.

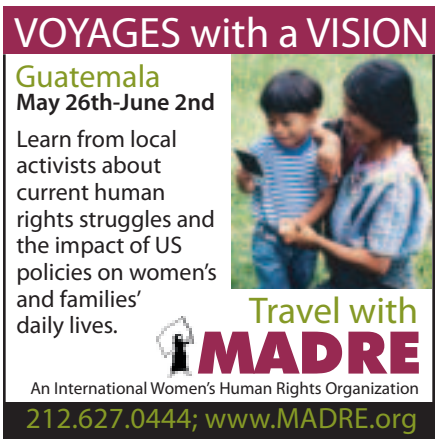
Because the much praised *Zodiac* is concerned with the desire to impose order, and with our perpetual failure to do so, you might say it's something like a Kubrick film, though realized with an empathy that Kubrick disdained. Because of this theme, maybe you'll also excuse the lateness of my review. Like *Zodiac*'s characters, I tried to control circumstances—press screening schedules, deadlines, the kids' bedtimes—and like them, I screwed up.

Now I can offer only a tardy echo: *Zodiac* is, as everyone says, an unusually complex and ambitious true-crime story, and (more important) a deeply engaging study of three obsessed men.

Or four, if you count the title character: the serial killer who announced himself to the San Francisco newspapers in 1969, issued a string of communiqués and taunts (some in code), terrorized the region, disappeared, reappeared and has never been conclusively identified. As a crime story, *Zodiac* is utterly inconclusive (unlike, say, *Dirty Harry*, which based its plot in part on this case). You don't get any answers—just the satisfaction of riding along with people who are caught up in this mystery.

They are two professionals and an amateur: police inspector Dave Toschi (Mark Ruffalo), newspaper police reporter Paul Avery (Robert Downey Jr.) and editorial cartoonist Robert Graysmith (Jake Gyllenhaal), an overgrown Eagle Scout and puzzle enthusiast known in the newsroom as Retard. Once the initial murders are out of the way—the film deliberately frontloads its violence—*Zodiac* settles into the story of these men and their intertwined, ever accelerating downward spirals.

Zodiac is a long movie, but one with a steadily quickening pace. The longer you watch the film, the more absorbing it becomes—which is enough to set it apart. What I really like about *Zodiac*, though, is that it is neither the usual product (a producer-driven marketing ploy dressed up like a movie) nor the usual alternative (the latest auteurist masterpiece by director David Fincher). *Zodiac* is Fincher's film, certainly; but it also belongs to screenwriter James Vanderbilt, cinematographer Harris Savides and the entire cast. For a change, the major studios have given us a whole movie. Just like old times. ■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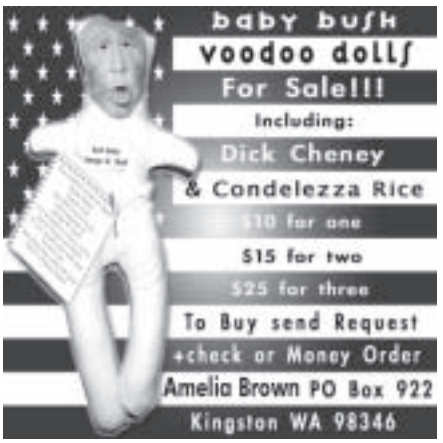

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BOSTON AREA. *Nation* discussion group seeks new members! Please contact Sam Pilato, Sam@alcove.arlington.ma.us, (781) 643-0038.

PLEASANTON, CA, Fremont, San Ramon, Danville, Dublin, Livermore *Nation* discussion group now forming. Call John at (925) 462-6815 or e-mail supervalue10@aol.com.

RICHMOND, VA, *NATION* DISCUSSION GROUP is forming. Please contact Jerry Gorman if you're interested in joining. (804) 266-7400; e-mail: gorfam@comcast.net.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

***NATION* STUDENT OUTREACH:** Attention student activists! If you're involved in organizing a progressive event, lecture or film festival on your campus or in your community and would like to distribute copies of *The Nation*, please let us know by calling (212) 209-5416.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

PUBLICITY DIRECTOR. *The Nation* magazine is seeking an organized media junkie with progressive politics, boundless energy and a keen entrepreneurial instinct to oversee and implement the publicity and syndication responsibilities for America's oldest weekly magazine. The ideal candidate will be detail-oriented, comfortable with tight deadline pressure, possess strong verbal and writing skills, be familiar with the media landscape and the blogosphere, and have a minimum of three to five years of experience working in publicity or communications. Located in our New York City office, the position offers excellent benefits and a congenial work atmosphere. *The Nation* is an equal opportunity employer. E-mail résumé, cover letter and salary requirements to: pubjob@thenation.com. No calls, please.

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PUZZLE NO. 3078

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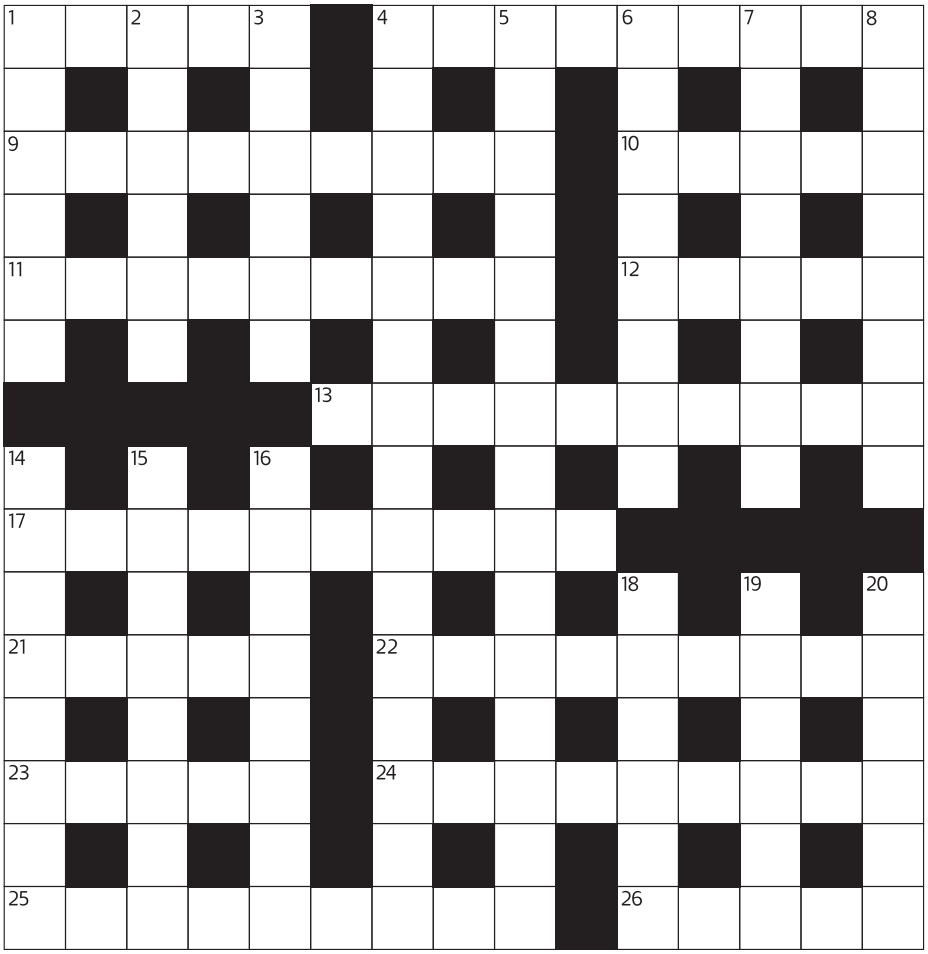

ACROSS

1 Slangy guys who might be long in December, up north. (5)

4 Medical specialist from the old city has nothing to behold but the heart of the matter. (9)

9 A number is wrong when the yellow one is in the air. (9)

10 The fruit of engagement, or just the times of them? (5)

11 Shakespeare's soul was so made with support, when the fellow had a shaky end. (9)

12 Is one confused by it? Yes, possibly because of the racket. (5)

13 Possibly a four-legged critter, and a tricky clue—at least some kind of life involved. (10)

17 Baseballs commonly appear when Dobbin doesn't want to be seen. (10)

21 They may be common, but one often finds them to be proper examples of a point taken in the intellect, philosophically. (5)

22 What one might feel for the past when you make it a slogan that's not quite proper. (9)

23 Three hundred and sixty-five days to the first of November is long. (5)

24 Put on fire—and the gate is swung with a number of what might be argued in court. (9)

25 Possibly appearing nude, covering a couple of metals—which would be considered pure. (9)

26 One who gets up part of the stairs? (5)

DOWN

1 Not associated with a coat of monochrome, but one of the little women seems to be hep, in a peculiar way. (6)

2 One who had little choice? Oh, it comes up to a degree, on the last part! (6)

3 What one says when annoyed with Tom! That man gets to make a critical attack! (6)

4 One doesn't behave so on purpose! (15)

5 Possibly paid too much, as one swung to far, left or right. (15)

6 First and second, certain tests are about 12, possibly. (8)

7 What a cabal might be involved with. (8)

8 Your mortarboard probably was, being dateless, perhaps. (8)

14 Simple words of appreciation will do! (5,3)

15 The hullabaloo sounds like the beer has the last laugh! (8)

16 Not exactly a lapse, nor a private description. (8)

18 In older radio and TV days, was one always by himself? Right, and you can get quite a fury with it. (6)

19 Stones like you find around the entrance way—or in 24. (6)

20 One that puts two and two together and gets under 50—which helps you rise in this world. (6)

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, or access our website at www.thenation.com/about/crossword.mhtml.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3077

M	A	S	O	C	H	I	S	M	■	T	H	R	E	E
A	■	P	■	O	■	C	■	O	■	O	■	E	■	D
G	R	A	N	N	I	E	■	T	H	E	S	H	O	W
M	■	N	■	T	■	B	■	I	■	S	■	A	■	A
A	N	D	■	O	N	E	F	O	R	■	O	N	E	R
■	■	A	■	R	■	R	■	N	■	T	■	G	■	D
F	O	U	R	T	O	G	O	■	B	O	N	S	A	I
E	■	■	■	I	■	S	■	S	■	G	■	■	■	A
T	W	O	F	O	R	■	S	H	O	E	H	O	R	N
I	■	P	■	N	■	M	■	E	■	T	■	N	■	■
S	P	I	N	■	C	A	L	L	E	R	■	T	H	E
H	■	N	■	V	■	K	■	L	■	E	■	A	■	M
I	M	I	T	A	T	E	■	A	N	A	G	R	A	M
S	■	O	■	R	■	U	■	C	■	D	■	I	■	E
M	O	N	E	Y	■	P	U	S	S	Y	F	O	O	T

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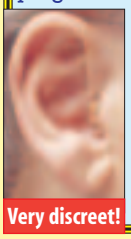

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